



HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Issue No. 440

October 2025

ISSN 2982-3935 (Print)

ISSN 2982-3943 (Online)



The Blue Gum Forest. Photo by Wyn Jones, 2 September 2025.
See story on page 3.

BMCS Members' Meeting

Thursday, 23 October, 6.30pm to 8.30pm

Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls

Vera Wong will speak about National Parks and Wildlife Service's "Scorecard", a program used to track the ecological health of NSW national parks.

"The Ecological Health Performance Scorecards (Scorecards) program is a landscape-scale biodiversity monitoring program by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service which measures various environmental indicators to show the health of our national parks." <http://bit.ly/3JWGAM9>

Light refreshments will be served. Please register your interest: <http://bit.ly/42rOB1Q>

Gardening with Natives in the Blue

Mountains: Sunday 9 November, 10am to 4pm

Mid Mountains Community Centre, 7 New Street, Lawson.

Find out more on page 5.

2025 marks the 25th anniversary of the inscription of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area on the UNESCO World Heritage List. As a testimony to the love and respect we have for this amazing and unique land, we will take the time to understand, connect with and seek to protect it.

The Great Koala National Park

One in five of koalas in NSW are now protected!

Huge news! NSW Government has announced that 176,000 hectares of precious native forest across the mid-north coast will be protected from logging.

The park will be home to one in five of the state's remaining koalas, connecting critical native forest with World Heritage-listed national park.

Over 100 threatened species will call the park home, including an estimated 12,000 koalas and 36,000 greater gliders.

A huge thank you to everyone who has made this park a reality. The scientists who provided the evidence, the community groups and locals who have been campaigning for more than a decade, the brave forest defenders who have prevented logging across the region for years.

Premier Chris Minns, Environment Minister Penny Sharpe and every MP who voiced their support for the park should be applauded for delivering on their promise in full.

But the fight isn't over. We need to show just how much community support there is for protecting our forests. Congratulate the Premier. Call your local NSW MP and tell them you support this park and want to see more state forests protected!

**Jacqui Mumford, Chief Executive Officer
Nature Conservation Council NSW**

8 September 2025

Join Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is an incorporated voluntary group of over 800 members. Our mission is to help protect, conserve and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains. Find out how you can help preserve our beautiful World Heritage Area. <https://www.bluemountains.org.au>

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Darug and Gundungurra people, and pay respect to Elders past and present.

BMCS NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

Native plant sales at the
**Blackheath Growers Market on
Sunday 12th October 2025
(8am to 12 noon).**

For enquiries and to place an order, please contact Nursery Manager, Bronwyn Murphy
plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

Post: PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Phone: 0490 419 779 * (leave message)

Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au

Website: www.bluemountains.org.au

Facebook and Instagram: (see website)

President: Annette Cam

president@bluemountains.org.au

Senior Vice President: Annette Sartor

education@bluemountains.org.au

2nd Vice President: Vacant

Administration Officer: Jeanette Robertson

sao@bluemountains.org.au

Bushcare Officer: Peter Ardill

bushcare@bluemountains.org.au

Environmental Education Officer:

Annette Sartor

education@bluemountains.org.au

Events Coordinator: Jo Carroll

events@bluemountains.org.au

Land Use Officer: Angela Langdon

landuse@bluemountains.org.au

Meetings Secretary: Heather Hull

hhull001@bigpond.net.au

Membership Secretary:

Andrew Solomon 0408 267 078

membership@bluemountains.org.au

National Parks & World Heritage Officer:

Madi Maclean

natpks@bluemountains.org.au

Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Nursery Manager: Bronwyn Murphy

plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com

Publicity Officer: Laura Lewsley

publicity@bluemountains.org.au

Sustainability / Climate Change Officer:

Nathalie Verellen

nathalieBMCS@gmail.com

Threatened Species Officer:

Liam Ramage 0478 088896

threatened_species@bluemountains.org.au

Treasurer and Public Officer:

Elizabeth Howard 0414 090 251

treasurer@bluemountains.org.au

Webmaster: Alan Crooks

webmaster@bluemountains.org.au

Bushwalking Convenor:

Doug Nicholls 0455 850 753

dougnicholls@bigpond.com

Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson

fmatter@bigpond.net.au

Thursday Interpretive Nature Group

(TING): Christine Davies

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Plant Study Group: Meredith Brownhill

mountains@westnet.com.au

Contact management committee members by phone: Please leave a message with your full contact details and reason for your call on 0490 419 779.

If you are a member of the Society and want to volunteer to help with the work of the Society, in any capacity:

email bmcs@bluemountains.org.au

*** or phone** 0490 419 779 (leave a message).



From the President

Now the warmer weather has arrived, as I write this in mid-September, I am starting to see the Eastern Silvereyes and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters migrating. The bandicoots have been active, digging in the moist, mossy part of my yard, aerating the soil as they go. I heard the first Channel-billed Cuckoo for the season in mid-September. Over the past 35 years I have lived in Lawson, they usually turn up on the first weekend in October but this year they are a little early.

Three items I want to share with you – two good news and one the opposite.

Redbank Power Station. The Independent Planning Commission of NSW (IPC) rejected Verdant Earth Technologies' application to transform the Hunter Valley Redbank Power Station into a bioenergy hub powered by biofuels, over environmental concerns including incentivising land clearing. The Society submitted an objection to this proposal. You can read more about it on the ABC news website - <https://bit.ly/4n46ZGr>

Thermal drones. Researchers using thermal drones, which fly over native forests including rainforests, have found nocturnal species such as Leadbeater's Possums, Yellow-bellied Gliders, as well as forest birds, bandicoots and wombats and invasive mammals. Using this technique, the researchers have identified more Greater Gliders than using other ground-based methods. This will help guide future forest management and help preserve and re-establish populations of these threatened species. You can read the report in The Conversation from 15 September 2025 - <https://theconversation.com/drones-with-thermal-cameras-are-revealing-the-secrets-of-elusive-australian-forest-wildlife-258906>

National Climate Risk Assessment. This assessment was recently released by the Federal Government and it confirms the devastating consequences of climate change, now and into the future. I have been spending some time reading the report, using the interactive website, and will share some insights in the next Hut News. In the meantime, please check out the report on the following link - <https://www.acs.gov.au/pages/national-climate-risk-assessment>

Hoping you have plenty of opportunity to get out and about in the natural environment over the next few months! Send in items about what you are doing and what you see, so we can share it with members.

—Annette Cam, president@bluemountains.org.au

Emission Reduction Targets What of the 2035 targets?

The years 2025 to 2035 will present the most significant challenges yet in saving our planet from climate change. Now that the Australian Government has announced emissions targets 62% to 70% below 2005 levels, what role can pragmatic environmentalists play?

How important will accelerating the rollout of renewables, avoiding new fossil fuel projects, ending native forest logging and regenerating damaged vegetation prove to be? Surely, scientific evidence in coming years might prove the target has to be raised before 2035?

Political organisations other than the Government need to put forward constructive alternatives for scrutiny and not merely criticise what the decision-makers in power in 2025 have announced.

—The Hut News Team.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Planning & Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly? Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection? Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit:

www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml

Walking in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area



**The 93rd Anniversary
of the reservation of
the Blue Gum Forest.
2nd September 2025.**



At Perrys Lookdown

Photos of the group and the anniversary cake by Richard Delaney

Bushwalkers and friends met at Perrys Lookdown to celebrate the 93rd anniversary of the saving of the Blue Gum Forest. Some were descendants of men and women who had been involved in the campaign to save the forest.

We had a cuppa and reflected on the beauty of the Grose / Bulgamatta Wilderness and the significance of the Blue Gum Forest in the journey to World Heritage. We listened to a few words from Wyn Jones and Andy Macqueen, we shared a celebratory cake and some of the group descended into the valley to the Blue Gum Forest. .

The cake, made by Marg Turton, was decorated with gumnuts and tiles from the 2001 Gumtree Songline Walk¹.



In the Blue Gum Forest.

- Relaxing by the Grose / Bulgamatta River (from left: Keith Muir, Wyn Jones and Richard Delaney).
- Ye olde Paddymade tent, by Paddy Pallin, was erected on the bank of the river for effect. Camping was in nearby Acacia Flat.

Photos by Richard Delaney.

Note¹: In 2001, ecologist Wyn Jones called for bushwalkers to join the Gumtree Songlines Walk, to celebrate and promote the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage listing by walking the land, to draw particular attention to the eucalypt-dominated biodiversity and pay tribute to all those who'd walked the country through the millennia. Read more in May 2025 Hut News (Page 7) - www.bluemountains.org.au - Publications – Hut News Archives – 2025.

Support natural beauty, not introduced degradation!

Spring-summer environmental weeds campaign 2025-26

The 2024-25 environmental weeds campaign generated considerable positive feedback and interest. Throughout the current spring and coming summer, the Society will be conducting a second campaign, to further raise community awareness and knowledge about this issue.

As you may have already noticed, there will be extensive advertising in the *Blue Mountains Gazette*, as well as media releases in *Hut News*, on the Society's Facebook page and in the weekly E-News outlet.

Environmental weeds pose a continual threat to the ecological and aesthetic values of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWH) and residents can play a vital role in managing this threat. The seeds of species like Buddleia (Butterfly-bush), Holly, Japanese Honeysuckle, English Ivy and Blackberry are distributed long distances, either by birds or wind. Whether you live close to bushland areas or otherwise, removing these plants from your garden can help to keep our bushland reserves and the GBMWH weed free.

Most importantly, the campaign seeks to support our hard-working local natural area volunteers and the bushcare and other volunteer conservation programs run by BMCC and NPWS. The Society extends its gratitude to these wonderful people for their valuable work and acknowledges the professional natural area managers, bushcare officers, bush regenerators, contractors and associated staff who contribute their skills to the environmental weed management cause.

For all you need to know about the local environmental weeds scene, including identification and management resources, check out the Society's revamped *Environmental Weeds in the Blue Mountains* website, at <https://bluemountains.org.au/environmental-weeds.shtml>. Tossed the weeds? Perhaps it's time to implement an environmentally friendly garden makeover! For lots of inspiring ideas, see *Creating an environmentally friendly garden in the Blue Mountains*, at <https://bluemountains.org.au/environmentally-friendly-garden.shtml>

— Peter Ardill BMCS Bushcare Officer



Buddleia frequently infests the Blue Mountains National Park and the GBMWH. Photo by Peter Ardill 2025.



The seed of Japanese Honeysuckle is deposited in bushland by birds. Photo by Peter Ardill, Lawson 2025

Have Your Say on Bengal Cat Imports

Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) seeks public comment on an application to include Bengal cat, a hybrid animal of a domestic cat and an Asian leopard cat for non-commercial household pet purposes in the Live Import List under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Read more: <https://bit.ly/47H2qNG> Send your comments to exotic.species@dcceew.gov.au or write to Live Import List and CITES Policy Section, DCCEEW, GPO Box 3090, Canberra 2601. Consultations close on 10 October 2025.

The Invasive Species Council is against the proposal. Please read the media release summarised below.

‘Sheer lunacy’: Application to import Asian leopard cat hybrids could supercharge Australia’s cat crisis

The Invasive Species Council has slammed an application to import Bengal cats – a hybrid of Asian leopard cats and domestic cats, warning it would mean **deliberately unleashing more genetic monsters** into a

country with wildlife already being devastated by feral and roaming pet cats. This crazy proposal, if approved, would reopen the door for allowing more of these genetic monsters into Australia, at a time when our wildlife is already buckling under the pressure of domestic cats. To deliberately import them, knowing how this super-species could intensify the problem, is sheer lunacy,’ **Invasive Species Council CEO Jack Gough said.**

‘Domestic roaming cats already kill more than **300 million native animals every year** in Australia. Feral cats have driven at least **25 species to extinction**. Now imagine crossing them with an Asian leopard cat – the result is a hybrid killing machine.

‘This Bengal cat proposal shows why Australia desperately needs reforms of live import processes as part of Federal Environment Minister Murray Watt’s review of environmental law. **We urge Minister Watt to do the responsible thing and block this ridiculous proposal and prioritise reform of live imports as part of the EPBC Act reforms.**’ Read more: <https://invasives.org.au/media-releases/sheer-lunacy-application-to-import-asian-leopard-cat-hybrids-could-supercharge-australias-cat-crisis/>



**Sunday 9 November 2025 10am-4pm at the
Mid Mountains Community Centre, 7 New St Lawson.**

Have you ever considered a garden with native plants but don't know where to start? Do you already have a native garden but want to know more?

Gardening with Native Plants is the first-ever event of its kind in the Blue Mountains. The day brings together four local native plant nurseries, local experts and our local gardeners to celebrate the beauty of native plants and the potential of native gardens.

It's about inspiring those Blue Mountains residents interested in planting a native garden and those who already have a native garden and want to know more. On the day there will be handouts and take-home resources to get you started and keep you going.

Funded by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, there is interest in developing the day as an annual event that may eventually include ticketed visits to outstanding local native gardens.

On 9 November, the courtyard of the Community Centre will host a native plant market with a great range of plants suitable for every position and climate from lower to upper Mountains. Contributing nurseries are Conservation Society; Wildplant Rescue Service; Glenbrook Native Nursery and Lithgow Community Nursery.

Speakers, many with deep local experience, will deliver a 20–30-minute presentations. Topics include how to get started with native gardens, what plants suit your local area, landscaping your native garden and choosing plants to attract birds and wildlife. For those already working on their native gardens there's a presentation on Blue Mountains soils and the unique needs of some of our iconic plants such as the waratah.

Our speakers include authors Peter and Judy Smith, Sue Cunningham from the Council's Bush Backyards program, local legend Jill Dark and local nursery specialist, Peter Mobbs. Don't miss the Nursery Managers Forum where you can get answers to all those tricky questions about plants are best for hedging, plants easy or hard to grow, rare or gloriously abundant. Are wattles short-lived? Can you grow natives in a pot?

This is a free event. Check the web site bmcsevents.squarespace.com for the full list of speakers, topics and the program and register for priority admission to talks.



A Date for your Diary:

Grounded - An art exhibition of Birds, Flowers, Bark, Seeds, Trees, and Landscapes by a collective of fourteen mosaic artists. The exhibition will be held at Braemar Gallery in Springwood from 27th November to 21st December. The Exhibition Opening is on Saturday 29th November. You will be able to read more in November Hut News.

HAIKU – A READING

I make a practise of writing haiku (short Japanese-style nature poems) while I'm walking. I read these haiku at "Live @The Turning Page" Springwood, in May, a poets' reading. I told the audience that they were written on walks with the BM Conservation Society. The haiku give me a vivid memory of the walk. They are organised in seasonal order, from spring to winter.

**taking time
to sniff the boronia
I make myself late**

This haiku celebrates *Boronia floribunda* which has the most divine perfume in the world! We were walking above the Grose valley on the north side from Bell's Line of Road, maybe Jinki Ridge.

**the right hand
stencilled in ochre -
my hand hovers over**

I went with the TING walkers to Goochs Crater, a long time ago. Such a special place, I remember seeing a lyrebird's nest in a rocky alcove.

**on the steep creek-bed
yellow petals have fallen -
hauling ourselves up**

I led a walk up the Engineers Track from Yarramundi, and then we crossed the Grose River and ascended a very steep ... track? ... north towards Grose Wold.

**breath steaming
a lyrebird in the bushes
calls my name**

What a delight in winter to hear a lyrebird, in this case on a walk in Hazelbrook, singing out for a mate. Who could not stop and savour the moment?

**Diana Levy
18/7/25**



A great day at Springwood Festival. Met lots of people and gave out heaps of flyers for 9th November Native Plant Day. Thanks to Andrew Solomon who organised the stall and Alan Crooks, Helen Yoxall, Nathalie Verellan and Haidee Roper for assistance on the day.



A Winter trip to the Darling/ Baaka River

Some of our BMCS members take winter holidays out to a warmer climate in western NSW, going to places like Menindee, Broken Hill and visit National Parks like Kinchega with the Darling River to see the bird life.

It was in Broken Hill this winter, when talking to a Barkandji artist that Black or Bony Bream fish first came into my consciousness. Standing in the Shed Art Gallery, I found myself looking at a Black Bream fish carved in the red-brown wood of a River Red Gum.

The Bream has an oval shape and small head – a nice face I thought, with a bright eye looking out at me. The fish tail fin was broad and I liked the rather chunky side fin, all the scales were sculpted into this red-brown wood. The home of the Black Bream is the River Darling, so carving its shape and story into River Red Gum wood gave it a place - the Darling/Baaka River. It is a lovely carving.

The Barkandji artist who carved the fish, Brian Harris told me that the people of Wilcannia and of the river do not see this fish very much anymore, if at all. The Bream like fast flowing waters and they need to migrate upstream to spawn, then the females lay eggs which hatch in a few days and float downstream. They feed on molluscs, worms and algae and have been known to live to 17 years of age. Thinking about their life cycle, they are very vulnerable in the polluted and weir controlled Darling/Baaka River of recent times.

The Black Bream/*Bidyanus bidyanus* has indeed become rare and is now a listed Endangered Threatened Species under the federal EPBC Act 1999. This species is *highly imperilled, and on the brink of functional extinction* in the rivers north of Menindee. The Paroo and Barwon Rivers and other northern rivers in the Murray-Darling Basin have declining Black Bream fish. Consequences of this for the river communities of many Indigenous nations must be devastating.

Also known as the Silver Perch it is bred for aquaculture and recreational fishing from dams, but remains threatened in the wild. The bream has become rare for obvious reasons like changed river flows from dam and weir constructions, degradation of river bank vegetation, competition from carp, and disease. This little Black Bream story is just one sad story of the Darling/ Baaka River.



We can take action to revive the river, so watch the short YouTube film *Save Our Mother the Barka*.

Take action now, support the campaign to Let the Water Flow, by the Nature Conservation Council. Go to <https://nature.nsw.gov.au/letthewaterflow/email/> to send an email to key decision makers.

— **Meredith Brownhill**

Images: Carving of Black Bream 2025; Main weir on River Darling, Menindee 2022; River Darling, Menindee 2025
Photos by Meredith Brownhill.

The Golden Wattle

Acacia longifolia (Sydney Golden Wattle) is flowering now – so beautiful along the highways and in our bushland.

In 1999 the wattles I planted in the garden of my first home in Blackheath, Olive Cottage, were 10 feet tall and flowering gloriously. I bought them from the Society's nursery as tiny tube stock.

I found it interesting to watch the life which teemed on the wattles. Every twig of every branch had leaves which had been chewed from without or sucked from within. There were spiders, ladybeetles, caterpillars, ants, native bees, feral bees and other tiny flying and crawling creatures.

There were several species of flies, some pretty little creatures with delicate wings and shiny jewels for bodies which reflect the sun. Tiny caterpillars would sometimes drop from branches on silken threads and then slowly haul themselves up again. Once they reached the leaves they were impossible to find.

Most wattles are comparatively short-lived. *Acacia longifolia* typically 10-20 years. When the Golden Wattle is at its prime, it is time to plant one or two new ones nearby. You can buy them from our nursery volunteers at the Blackheath Growers Market.

—**Christine Davies.** 21 September 2025



Acacia longifolia, Braeside firetrail, 21 September 2025

Environmental weeds and their impacts

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*): impenetrable, prolific, prickly and persistent

Gorse is a particularly damaging Australian environmental weed. Seed production is prolific, and the resultant dense groves of plants exclude indigenous vegetation. Also, the dense thickets are very flammable, and impenetrable, due to the sharp spines on mature plants.

Gorse plants are predominantly green, and usually 1-2 metres in height, although they can reach 3-4 metres. Flowering occurs mainly in winter to spring, and each plant produces numerous seed pods.

The occurrence of Gorse in the Blue Mountains is currently confined to the upper Mountains, including Medlow Bath and Blackheath. Accordingly, if you ever see this plant in other areas of the Mountains, contact BMCC immediately.

Seedlings can be dug out with a trowel. Larger plants can be dug up with a mattock, or cut at the base and then painted with Glyphosate herbicide. Be sure to carefully place plants or branches containing seed pods in a BMCC green bin, to prevent spread of seed. As gorse seed remains viable in soil for many years, it is essential to check for natural regeneration of plants. For further information, see <https://weedsbluemountains.org.au/weeds/gorse/>

— BMCS Bushcare Officer



Photos by Peter Ardill

Begrudging Badgerys; censuring sausage-machine tourism

Opinion by Don Morison

Travelling south on the M7 Motorway, an incomplete deck for a Badgerys-related interchange projects like a white elephant tusk. Is this an omen of the white elephant that Badgerys will become?

Why is so much public money going into Badgerys Airport while Governments are pleading poor-mouth about environmentally sustainable expenditures on many worthwhile projects? How many decades will it take for the aircraft that do use Badgerys to become less fossil fuel intensive or less noisy?

The Government approach to the new airport is a colossal promotion of unnecessary passenger air travel. Up to 70% emission reduction by 2035 has been targeted even though reaching the long known 2030 targets is not being taken seriously enough.

There are Government promoted developments in the middle of the heat and air pollution trap that the relevant part of the Sydney Basin represents, calling the

new locations names like “Bradfield”. This reminds me that Bradfield was a visionary who, early last century, gave politicians excellent advice about a sensible Greater Sydney transport system although most of that advice was never followed.

New plans for Mascot Airport imply that nothing in the next 20 years will prevent a massive increase in the total of aircraft related emissions from all airports in Sydney. Climate projections indicate Greater Western Sydney desperately needs to retain and expand its tree cover. But over-promotion of Badgerys will prevent that. Native birds are particularly at risk because of all the habitat being removed or modified to reduce the chances of bird strike.

Which brings me to the vultures. Australia does not have native vultures in the ornithological sense, but government authorities have felt the need to investigate various allegations about the behaviour of private entities concerning airport related matters, even before any aircraft tyre has thumped the Badgerys tarmac.

What kind of tourism experiences do Australians overseas or inbound visitors really need or want?

Bucket-list behaviour and fleeting visits looking for destination highlights leads to a kind of “sausage machine tourism”. Do we really need to boost our economy with forms of tourism that don’t allow chances for engagement with the locals or periods of quiet contemplation of a destination’s natural wonders?

Do we need to deaden our own economy by pleading with Australians that have disposable income to pour their funds into overseas economies? Why don’t we promote alternatives to air travel and encourage people to holiday near at hand?

TRAVEL MOROCCO FLY FREE CASABLANCA MARRAKECH
FOSSIL FUEL EMISSIONS AMALFI COAST DISCOVER
ICELAND WHERE'S YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE BAKU TO
YUEVAN PALERMO TO CATANIA POLLUTION NORWEGIAN
CRUISE BEYOW ENJOY THE ROYAL TREATMENT
WONDERS OF JAPAN SLOW BOAT TO CHINA FRENCH POLY-
NEZIA TAHITI FLIGHTS INCLUDED IMAGINE KOREA
SPAIN ALASKA EXCEPTIONAL SAVINGS PORTUGAL
LUXURY THE MEDITERRANEAN SAVE UP TO 63% MAG-
NIFICENT MEKONG ULTRA LUXURY GRAND EUROPEAN
TOURS CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL AGENT BALI NOISE
MOROCCO CASABLANCA TO MARRAKECH MORE SAVINGS
AMALFI COAST DISCOVER ICELAND BOOK TODAY BAKU TO
YUEVAN TREES CUT DOWN SO NO BIRD STRIKES
PALERMO TO CATANIA NORWEGIAN CRUISE KOREA FREE
FLIGHT OFFERS POLYNESIA GULF OF (WHAT'S ITS NAME?)
DUBAI FREQUENT FLYERS SCOTLAND ALASKA NEWYORK

Butterflies to the Garden

— Roberta Johnston

Over 10,000 diverse species from about 30 super families are described within the Australian Lepidoptera (scaled wings) order of moths, butterflies, skippers. The majority occur in warm humid coastal regions, particularly from north eastern Queensland to southern eastern cool temperate coastal areas. Butterflies are not suited to arid environments or extremes of high temperature and low moisture.

About 100 are known from the Sydney Region. My sightings are happenstance - 17 different butterflies and 6 moths have been recorded and identified in this Upper Mountains garden.

Lepidopterans' aerodynamic ability far outshines my focus, with or without a camera. Those confirmed obligingly lingered for the camera lens, others skilfully floated and zigzagged away, their appearance and flight patterns beguiling and poetic as they resist a beginner's identification.

As butterflies (suborder Dystrysia) represent a small percentage of Lepidoptera, Michael Braby considers butterflies can be described as day flying moths, while most moths are nocturnal. All require both specific and diverse plant species and habitat. Butterfly larva commonly depend on plant species found in moist habitat.

Butterflies have two pairs of wings wrapped externally with a series of overlapping scales. Braby describes each wing pair as made of flattened adjoined membranous sacs with strengthening veins running inside the enclosed wing space. When resting, butterfly wings are often held upright while moths' usually held flat, though there are overlapping characteristics of both suborders.

Some years they arrive battered and dwindling in numbers, at the end of their travels, impacted by weather patterns, fires and storms. The effect of destruction of



Banks Brown



Meadow Argus

habitat, such as clearing of forests and various suitable terrains highlights the impact human caused degradation has on ecosystems of rich fauna and flora reserves.

The annual numbers of these beautiful miniature flying artworks, whose diversity and flying movements are instructive for identification, reflect the state of the environment.

Sighted: (Butterflies) Banks Brown; Splendid Ochre; Macleays Butterfly; Cabbage White; Meadow Argus; Caper White; Wanderer Monarch; Glasswing; Common Brown; Orchard Swallowtail; Painted Lady; Yellow Admiral; Small Grass Yellow; Brown Ringlet; Jezebel Common; Grass Skipper (also called Grass Dart); Sword Grass Brown; (Moths) Pale Brown Moth (genus *Oxycaenus*); Australian Magpie Moth; Type of Tiger Moth; Light Ermine Moth; Common Whistling Moth; White Wings (delicate yellow and black markings) unidentified.

References: The Complete Field Guide to Australian Butterflies - Michael F Braby; iNaturalist site; A Field Guide to Australian Butterflies - Robert Fisher; Guidance with identification: - Jude and Elis; Pollinator / butterfly attracting plant list: - Peter Ardill; Plants - Tania - Katoomba Wild Plant Rescue & Webers Nursery.

Spring 2025 spreads westward

From the points of the Sydney sandstone region near the coast, to the Blue Mountains range, Newnes Plateau and higher altitudes, the spring of a rainy year progressively reveals its blooms. The diversity of flora and fauna in the myriad ecological systems found within this region make it both a joy and a serious challenge for environmentalists to defend.

On September 4, members of the Thursday Interpretive Nature Group visited the Dharawal National Park near Appin. This is a National Park drained by the steep sided creeks of the Georges River and adjacent catchments. One of the best of its many swimming holes was designated by First Australians as a women and children only area.

We drove down a route being turned into a multi-laned highway with a few pitiful looking koala-crossing warning signs. How will the delayed construction of a koala underpass affect the koalas whose habitat is being replaced by housing for humans? Inside the Dharawal National Park we were greeted by the sight and sound of 10 or so Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos flying overhead. A speciality of this part of the Hawkesbury sandstone is stands of Gymea Lilies spaced close to each other.

Seeing these flowers blooming in the wild is much more rewarding than the sight of a few nursery-bred ornamentals.

Between stands of Gymea Lilies, the vegetation became more like our Blue Mountains bushland, with gnarled Old Man Banksia, Eucalypts including Red Bloodwoods and Scribbly Gums, Waratahs and masses of smaller wildflowers.

— Don Morison



Photos: Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos (Geoff Dernee)
Gymea Lilies (Christine Davies)





Have You Seen This Rare Flower?

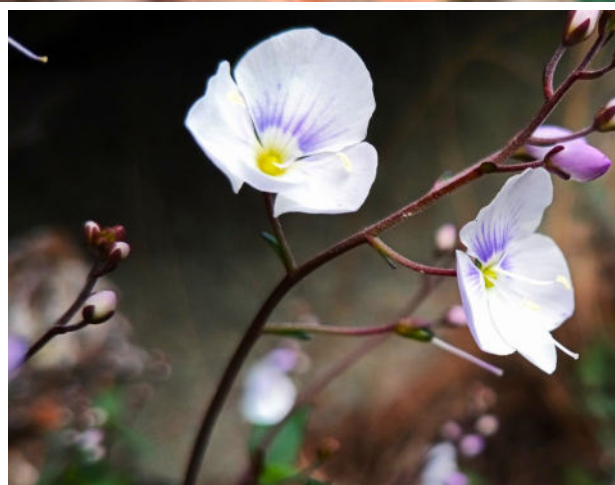
The Blue Mountains Speedwell (*Veronica lithophila*) is a trailing perennial herb with bright green leaves having 2–9 small teeth on the margins, often purple on the underside and hairless. The flowers are very pale purple (from lavender to almost white) with darker purple veins and grow on long spikes of up to 18 blooms.

It was first collected by the French-born explorer Francis Barrallier during the incursions he undertook into Gundungurra country in 1802. Since that time it has been recorded over a wide expanse of the Blue Mountains from Ngula Bulgarabang and Mt Solitary in the north to the slopes of Mount Colong in the south and escarpment country around Lake Burragarang in the east.

Blue Mountains Speedwell (*Veronica lithophila*) occurs in shallow pockets of soil with high soil moisture in crevices on flat to almost vertical rock faces or cliffs. It grows mostly in sheltered situations on south-facing slopes where it is shaded for most of the day, sometimes in deep ravines, or near creeks or waterfalls.

The species status was assessed by a panel of experts leading to it being listed as Endangered on 5 July 2023 on the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. The NSW government followed suit, listing it in December of the same year as Endangered on the *NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act*. It is threatened by a range of factors from browsing to drought. Almost its entire range was impacted by the disastrous Black Summer bushfires and afterwards some previously known populations could not be relocated leading to fears that they may have been wiped out. The impact of climate change can only make this situation worse.

This spring I am collaborating with the Saving Our Species program of the National Parks & Wildlife Service to find as many populations as we can. It is in flower right now and so it's the best time to look for it in the vast wilderness of the southern Blue Mountains. They are known to flower over the spring months but the peak flowering is usually in October.



I'm calling on all outdoor enthusiasts to be on the lookout for this Blue Mountains endemic whilst out in the bush. We need to know more about it to better conserve it. If you happen to come across one of these plants, please take photographs with the location recorded and post on iNaturalist. Upload your photos even if you are unsure. I'll be happy to have a look and confirm your identification. You can find me on the app under username **I_ramage**, or feel free to email me: threatened_species@bluemountains.org.au

—Liam Ramage
Threatened Species Officer

Read more: <https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/species/pubs/87479-conservation-advice-05072023.pdf> and <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/veronica-lithophila-final-determination.pdf>.

Photos by Liam Ramage.

Greens to introduce cat containment laws in NSW

New laws will be proposed by the Greens in the NSW Parliament in October that would make people responsible for keeping their cat safely at home and give Councils the discretion to regulate and enforce cat containment measures in priority areas. NSW is the only state in Australia that has not acted to protect the hundreds of millions of native animals that are killed by wandering cats every year, with 65% of the community wanting action to contain cats. **Source: Sue Higginson, Greens Member of the NSW Legislative Council.**

HUT NEWS: Do you want to contribute an article to November Hut News? Word length is 400 words or by negotiation. Images high definition jpeg. Enquiries to Christine Davies, Newsletter Editor, Email hutnews@bluemountains.org.au or leave a message at 0490 419 779 before 12th October.

Hut News Trivia, Question 17. How many spider species are estimated to be in Australia? Our answer can be found in this newsletter.

Wildlife Real Estate: Creating habitat at Mt Tomah

On Saturday 23 August a small group visited the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mt Tomah (BMBG) where Ian Allan, Supervisor Natural Areas and Arboriculture, showed us where tree hollows had been installed and talked about habitat creation and preservation.

The habitat tree where hollows had been installed had been attacked by a fungus that eats the cellulose of the tree and, after all the wet years, there was a fear the top of the tree would fail. As a result, much of the outer branching was removed. Some hollows primarily targeting Gang-gang Cockatoos have been inserted in suitable side branches and it is hoped to install more hollows this year. The emphasis is to use areas of the tree that are already a likely hollow site. Birds look for soft decayed areas, caused by fungi, and work on those areas. It can take two generations of birds to form a useful hollow. Powerful Owls who require large hollows are known to frequent the site so larger hollows may be created at the top of the tree for them. There is also a significant area on this tree that could be used by micro bats.

Ian emphasised the need to carefully select trees for hollow insertion and how in the future we may be able to deal with older decaying trees by removing an inhabited failing branch and relocating it somewhere else.

In this same area is what is claimed to have been the oldest *Eucalyptus fastigata* on Mt Tomah. Unfortunately, this tree is now dead. Prior to the BMBG receiving the site, the tree was in a paddock, surrounded by compacted soil, with its dead wood and mulch removed. A wall and road were built right next to it. The tree would have entered a long "death spiral" where it had to use energy to ward off each event. Gardens staff had tried a variety of strategies over many years to save the tree but, with too much water in recent years, the tree finally succumbed and died. With major branches removed this tree will remain in the garden and provide habitat for native fauna for many years to come.

Elsewhere in the Garden we observed an area burnt in the 2019 fires and how it was regenerating. Gardens staff are preserving dead wood in trees and fallen wood in the regrowth area as these are essential for birds, native bees and fungi. The regrowth of low level vegetation is essential for small birds. Ian emphasised the importance of understanding this complex web of life.

The Garden has many exotic trees on which birds were seen to be feeding after the fires. After the fires these small oases of vegetation provided water and food for birdlife outside the fence. So whilst the Garden and our own private gardens could be described as "anthropogenic ecosystems" they can be significant refuges after a fire event.

--Elizabeth Howard

Image: Ian Allan from BMBG discussing habitat preservation after fire. Photo by Elizabeth Howard.



Photos (above and on page 11)
Landcare site in dry conditions, with Mary Fell mulching. On page 11 you will see a photo of Gordon Fell, also hard at work, mulching.

Landcare in Broken Hill

Volunteering in Broken Hill Landcare was part of a winter escape for some BMCS members this year.

Volunteers are appreciated in country towns. For instance, volunteers run the information centres in Menindee and Milparinka. Helping with tree planting and other landcare projects is a marvellous way to learn about a place, meet its local community and contribute to environmental restoration, which supports our wildlife. It's fun too!

The Broken Hill Landcare group is as busy as ever, rehabilitating some land that was part of mining operations and is now a wildlife protection reserve with a passive recreation area for locals and visitors. The Imperial Lake site now has water in the lakes again after recent rain with a return of Black Pacific Ducks and Little Pied Cormorants. River Red Gums/*Eucalyptus camaldulensis* growing near the lakes are wonderful habitat and, with nice walking paths, it is a great place to walk and do some birding.

Lead-contaminated soil is ever present in Broken Hill, so mulch is being spread widely to suppress dust. Even the car parking area was mulched with some help from Mary, Gordon and Meredith. We were rewarded by lovely fresh home-baked scones with jam and cream for morning tea, and good company.

Imperial Lake Landcare site is on the Barrier Highway as you approach Broken Hill and is open on Saturday mornings for the public to walk in and enjoy. <https://www.landcarebrokenhill.com/imperial-lakes-nature-park.html>

—Meredith Brownhill



BUSHWALKING:

Enjoy the bush, learn about the Blue Mountains natural environment and find out why bushwalking has been a popular pastime in the Blue Mountains for more than 100 years. Our bushwalking convenor is Doug Nicholls dougnicholls@bigpond.com, phone 0455 850 753.

Walks are graded and generally suitable for walkers of average fitness but may vary in degree of difficulty. Participants need to be aware of their own capabilities and can discuss with the bushwalking convenor, group coordinator or leader.

Underneath is a brief summary of walks and leaders for this month.

Please check our website for detailed walks program and program changes. <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/bushwalking.shtml>

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short day walks 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator: Melanie Lawson 0431 214 687. melanielawson@outlook.com.au.

All walks are Grade 3 unless indicated otherwise.

Oct 6 **No walk scheduled due to Public Holiday**

Oct 13 **Leura Forest** 7km ascent/descent 400m (approx). Leader Lyn 0432 352 850

Oct 20 – **no walk scheduled. Check website for updates.**

Oct 27 **Mount Victoria cave circuit.** 8km, 468m ascent/descent. Leader Melanie 0431 214 687

Nov 3 **South Lawson waterfall track.** 3km, ascent/descent 117m. Leader: Melanie 0431 214 687

TUESDAY FITNESS WALKS: 'Medium Day' walks suitable for walkers of average fitness, 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea/lunch/adequate water. Coordinator: Phill Cox (0415 449 174 mrpacox@hotmail.com)

7 Oct 7 **Meadowbank to Parramatta**, G1/10K, Judith, 0419 780 640.1

Oct 14 **Jack Evans Track**, G2/5K, (190m↑↓), Maurice, 0402 402 783.

Oct 21 **Wentworth Falls and Rocket Point track**, G2/3K, (110m↑↓), Julie 0466 964 815, Ian Chappel 0412 757 902.

28 Oct **Fairyland Track & Riverside Walk – Lane Cove Nat. Park**, G2-3/7K, Anna 0403 711 457/Imma_0422 313 828.

4 Nov **Woolwich Wharf to Kelly's Bush & Return.** G1/5K, Robyn 0409 127 012.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS are 2-3 hours and are conducted at a leisurely pace. Coordinator: Beverley Thompson (4757 2076 denfenella12@gmail.com)

Oct 9 **Adeline Park Reserve, Faulconbridge.** Leader Ros 0417 261 465. Grade 2

Oct 16 **Manly Wharf to Shelley Beach and return, easy.** Train to Central. Maurice 0402 402 783. Grade 1

Oct 23 **Sun Valley. Leisurely short walk along pretty fire trail beside creek.** Meet Blaxland Station. Mary 0410 691 396. Carpool. Grade1

Oct 30 **Fort Rock, Centennial Glen and Walls Ledge, Blackheath.** Ros 0417 261 465. Grade 2

Nov 6 **Point Pilcher, Medlow Bath.** Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 2

Nov 13 **Popes Glen, Blackheath.** Carpool. Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Coordinator Harold Thompson (0409 010 737, Harold.thompson@bigpond.com).

Oct 4 **Erskine Creek.** Harold 0409 010 737. Grade 3-4, 5km. Map Penrith.

Oct 11 **Wilkinson Hill.** Harold 0409 010 737. Grade 3, 7km. Map Mt Wilson.

Oct 18 **Burra Koran Head.** Harold 0409 010 737. Grade 3, 12km. Map Mt Wilson.

Oct 25 **Yileen Spur.** Harold 0409 010 737. Grade 3, 8km. Map Mt Wilson.

NOTE TO ALL BUSHWALKERS: Meeting places and times are not given because sometimes there are changes to the program. Please check with the walks leader.

Visit the Saturday walks facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks?fref=nf>



Gordon Fell mulching at Broken Hill Landcare. Story and another photo on page 10.

World Kangaroo Day 2025

Blue Mountains World Kangaroo Day has been running events every year since 2022.

This year, Blue Mountains World Kangaroo Day (BMWKD) has **four main events**; three are on during the day of 18th October 2025 – children's, public and rescue & care - and the fourth is on in the evening of the 24th October 2025 –**Kangaroo Inspired Piano Concert.**

The main **AIMS** for the 2025 year are to focus on spreading the word about ...

- how **amazing** our kangaroos are
- how we can help/support their **rescuers and carers.**

All events are at the Wentworth Falls School of Arts Complex. Read more: <https://www.bluemountainworldkangarooday.org/events.html>

Hut News Trivia, Question 17. ANSWER

Experts estimate there are 10,000 spider species in Australia with some researchers claiming there could be closer to a total of 12,000 to 20,000 spider species in the country. Only around 2,700 species have been described and named.

A page for keen nature observers of all ages ...
What to look for in October in the Blue Mountains

Spring in the Blue Mountains

People in the lower Blue Mountains have been enjoying spring wildflowers in August and September. But spring arrives in the Upper Blue Mountains in October. Some of my favourite wildflower walks have been Rigby Hill (off the Bells Line of Road), Walls Ledge (Blackheath), Lockleys Pylon (near Leura), all with spectacular views.

From 1st October, listen for the Koel—just arrived from Indonesia—and look for cicadas emerging. The loudest insects in the world have spent years underground as nymphs with no need of a voice.

Birds are nesting or feeding their young. The bushland is full of life! Spring in the Blue Mountains is a wonderful time of year!

Baby Food

The Magpie at Govetts Leap on 21 September had gathered a beak-full of tasty morsels for the young in its nest.

We saw it pull a very large grub from the soil but not eat it.



Listen to the Dawn Chorus!

The dawn chorus begins 30 minutes to an hour before sunrise. Birds wake up early and greet the dawn. Why not wake up early and listen to the dawn chorus? It is most wonderful way to begin the day.

Australia is a land of songbirds—why do they sing at dawn? Is it to declare territory, communicate with a other birds, or do they sing for the pure joy of being able to sing and being alive.

The dawn chorus is made up of individual birds, each with their own song. When the sky lightens they are able to leave their roosts of the night and get on doing all the things that birds have to do to survive.

—Adelina

Hello Adelina,

On Sunday 14 September I walked the shortcut track at Wentworth Falls Picnic Area to the Conservation Hut and spotted this beautiful Gang-gang Cockatoo, two in a space of 10 metres. A few walkers were stopping to observe and discuss what species of bird it could be. I looked up an online post and found out it was a male Gang-gang Cockatoo. Strangely the red feathered head wasn't as prominent as in the pictures I found online. Perhaps a juvenile male?

— Jane Westwood (Photo by Jane Westwood)



Once more common in the Blue Mountains, Gang-gang Cockatoo numbers have been declining for decades. The 2010-20 Black Summer bushfires destroyed large areas of their habitat. As a result, they have now been listed as an endangered species.

A street in Katoomba is named Gang Gang Street.

? What did you see in the Blue Mountains - in your garden or during your favourite bushwalk - during October? Was it something that wasn't there last month? Tell Hut News! Please send your stories, photos and drawings to Adelina hutnews@bluemountains.org.au or post to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.