



Canberra Nature Map newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 2: June 2025



The 10,000 sightings club

Congratulations Mike Sim on becoming our seventh NatureMapr contributor to pass 10,000 sightings

He joins Alison Milton, Michael Bedingfield, Trevor Preston, Ciaran Ernst-Russell, Heather Jordan and RodDeb as epic NatureMapr contributors! Mike is a founding member, having joined in May 2014 and his bounty of sightings includes 56 that have been marked as significant! He is also a location moderator for Isaacs Ridge, Mount Mugga Mugga, Isaacs, and Jerrabomberra, ACT. You can see all of Mike's sightings on his [profile page](#).



Red triangle slug reported by Clarel. Not locally in Canberra but my sister has recently been seeing these at her home just north of Brisbane.

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Rare sightings

Indian butterfly invades northern Australia

A male Tawny Coster *Acraea terpsicore*, is a small, leathery-winged butterfly belonging to the Nymphalidae (brush-footed butterfly) family, found in grassland and scrub habitats.

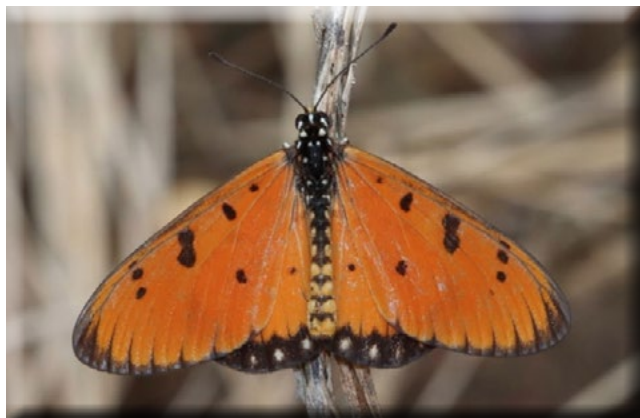
Naturalist and birdwatcher Chris Sanderson took a photo south of Darwin of an orange female butterfly not known among the more than 400 species previously recorded in Australia. He sent a copy to Michael Braby who subsequently identified it.

New butterfly species are only known to have established in Australia twice before over the last 200 years.

The Cabbage White Butterfly was introduced to the east coast of Australia in 1929 with vegetable imports from New Zealand.

The Wanderer, or Monarch Butterfly, established in Australia as early as 1871, after its milkweed host plant was introduced.

The new species: a Tawny Coster is spreading rapidly across the top end and had reached Cairns by April 2021.



A bright orange butterfly that has been spreading across Asia for the last 30 years has now established itself across much of northern Australia.

When Australian butterfly expert Dr Michael Braby received an email in 2012, purporting to show a new species found south of Darwin, he could not believe what he was seeing.

This butterfly has now been reported in the Brisbane area, at Coffs Harbour and in November last year it was photographed

in MacKellar in the ACT, so keep your eye out for this rare invader.

Kevin McCue

(Reproduced from the Field Naturalist Association of Canberra newsletter)

Striped Honeyeater

In early May a local reported the rare sighting of a Striped Honeyeater in Higgins: the first sighting reported on Canberra Nature Map but a COG member told me there was a previous sighting in 1995.

I live in Higgins just 10 minutes walk from the sighting but on the day everyone rushed to find it I was committed to another event at The Pinnacle. However, Raw Shorty found it and took some great photos.



Photo: Raw Shorty

He says: *After getting a report of a Striped Honeyeater in Higgins I dropped what I was doing and went straight out to look for it. What an amazing bird for Canberra.*

I didn't find it when I went out the next day and thought it had moved on but further reports saying it had moved into the nearby playground led to me eventually finding the bird. From all accounts it stayed for several weeks and Tracey, who first reported the bird spotted it in her own yard a few weeks later.

Alison Milton

Are you a schoolteacher or have other connections to a particular school?

If so and you think that the school would benefit from a direct NatureMapr Connection on CNM please message [Michael Mulvaney](#).

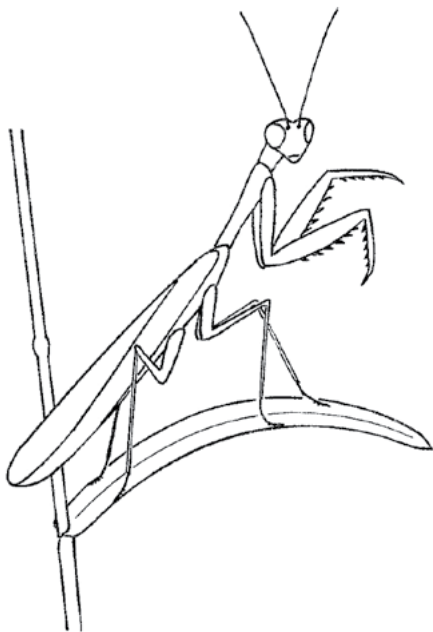
We could set up a school login, and create a map for the school grounds or any area off particular interest to the school. School children could then take wildlife images in these areas and lodge them for identification and relevant ecological information. Students with particular interest or aptitude could become moderators for a school site and as they become proficient expand their moderation roles to other parts of the NatureMapr platform. Michael would provide direct feedback to participating students.

Michael Mulvaney



The Purple-winged Mantis - *Tenodera australasiae* - a false prophet

The word mantis comes from the Greek and the literal meaning is 'prophet'. The names mantis, mantid and praying mantis are used interchangeably. If you see a mantis perched somewhere with forelegs folded in salutation, it is not praying for divine inspiration nor for world peace. It is praying for its next meal. And if some hapless insect comes close enough, the mantis will strike quickly and grasp the visitor in its strong forelegs. It has sharp spines along the two gripping sides of its front legs that are a major weapon. The spines pierce the body of the victim, making escape very difficult and causing serious injury. It then begins to eat its capture while it is still alive. The Purple-winged Mantis feeds mostly on insects. But it is a large creature itself, with the female being up to 10cm long, and will also eat small frogs and reptiles. The male is smaller but is also a talented predator. When hunting these animals will perch on shrubs or other vegetation, standing erect with forelegs raised in anticipation. They will wait motionless for a victim to come close enough to strike, or may move slowly with delicate movements in its direction. They may also hang from the foliage with their back legs, waiting for an insect to come within striking range.



Our subjects are known as *Tenodera australasiae*. They are slow moving and although capable flyers they are reluctant to do so and fly short distances. Their colours are variable, being mostly green or brown. These colours help with camouflage among the vegetation they inhabit. The wings are shades of purple to brown with pale green edges but are normally folded and tucked away. The upper part of the abdomen under the wings is purple. They have a triangular shaped head and a long and narrow body. They have two large compound eyes and three small simple eyes, called ocelli, on the top of the head. This gives them good vision with an almost 360 degree range which is valuable for a hunter.



The drawing I have provided is a simplistic one of no particular species but shows a mantis in a typical ambush posture. The photo is of a mating couple of the Purple-winged Mantis. It requires careful examination because the two insects are well camouflaged among the grasses and other plants. The smaller male is harder to recognise because his upper body is missing. The female has eaten his head and front legs. (See the CNM sighting in the references.) For the amorous male mantis this is a common event. The male doesn't die immediately and the copulation process continues. When it is finished the female will eat the rest of the male and thus provide valuable nourishment for the fertilised eggs. The males are aware of the

risk and approach a female with great caution. Fortunately, not all of them become a meal for their spouse and the more careful ones are able to live another day.

When the eggs are mature the female lays them in on the branch of a plant. While doing so she exudes a liquid that she stirs into foam with her body movements. This creates a protective covering for her eggs that sets hard into a bag-shaped pouch about 25mm long and 15mm in diameter (see photo insert). The egg case is called an ootheca and remains attached to the plant for the cold months while the eggs are dormant. These egg cases are a common sight locally, attached to a plant stem one to several feet above ground level. The young hatch in spring and the life cycle begins again. The young are able to hunt even when very small and grow by a succession of moults.

The Purple-winged Mantis is endemic to Australia and occurs in all states in a variety of ecosystems but mostly on the east side of the continent. While it is not a true prophet, its lifecycle and survival strategy are extraordinary. It may not be able to see into the future, but with its large prominent eyes and excellent vision, if you see one when exploring, it has most likely seen you first!

Main references

<http://www.ozanimals.com/Insect/Purple-winged-Mantis/Tenodera/australasiae.html>

<http://www.ento.csiro.au/education/insects/mantodea.html>

<https://bie.ala.org.au/species/https://biodiversity.org.au/afd/taxa/f1e479e6-780a-417d-a223-e2213e9dbc67>

<https://canberra.naturemapr.org/sightings/3376171>

(This article was edited slightly from one published in the Friends of Grasslands newsletter for September-October 2017.)

Michael Bedingfield

Meet the mappers 17

Lisa Bradley

As interviewed by Matthew Frawley on 3 June 2025

Lisa Bradley joined NatureMapr in October 2021 and has contributed over 3,000 sightings, with many of these being plants she has discovered in her local patch of Aranda Bushland. We caught up recently to find out more.

Tell us about yourself and how you discovered NatureMapr?

I don't remember when I discovered NatureMapr but I remember when I got hooked. I had submitted a couple of orchids but lost interest. When I found what I thought was an *Epacris* sp. and it wasn't in *Our Patch: Field Guide to the Flora of the Australian Capital Region as photographed in the Aranda Bushland*, I got excited and posted to my fb page that I thought I had found a species not recorded in *Our Patch*. David Baldwin encouraged me to record the sighting in NatureMapr. It wasn't new. It was Urn Heath - *Melichrus urceolatus* – in

the same family as *Epacris* so similar in appearance but very common in Aranda Bushland, but I was hooked and then spent most days in Aranda Bushland adding sightings to NatureMapr.



Melichrus urceolatus

For at least a year, I was a purist and just recorded plants. The second edition of *Our Patch*, published in 2007, includes 179 plant species. Currently, I have 395 plant species in my NatureMapr Aranda Bushland plants collection. I hope to reach 400 - I know a few species that are supposed to be there that continue to elude me. If anyone can show me a *Exocarpos strictus* in Aranda Bushland, it would make me very happy.

What's your favourite place to explore and take photos?

Obviously Aranda Bushland was my first, but later on I started recording species found at our 20 acre property in Kangaroo Valley. According to the NatureMapr Field Guide for our property, I've recorded 381 species, but that includes all types of flora and fauna - not just plants. I've recorded over 100 species of native plants on the property. Not too long ago, one of the NatureMapr moderators, Dr Kevin Mills, visited our property and over lunch said, "you realise that your place is an endangered ecological community - Illawarra Lowland Grassy Woodland". We didn't, so it was exciting to learn that.

When you are out in the field, what photography equipment do you use?

Usually my iPhone. It works well for plants, but last year, we spent 6 weeks traveling through NSW and Queensland to Cairns, then to Cape York and returned south via the east coast. For the trip I bought a Canon PowerShot SX70 HS. It has a fixed lens, so no good for 'real photography', but it has a 60X zoom. It actually takes pretty reasonable photos. Somewhere during the trip, I realised that I didn't have a hope of identifying the plants – too many weird and wonderful species, but there are fewer than 1000 species of birds (some sources say about 900), so I abandoned plants and switched to birds. It turns out that one of our moderators, Dr Rosemary Purdie, did field work around Winton and is an expert on plants in the area. We have since added another great moderator who



can identify plants from the north, Jason Stewart, and Ciaran is always incredible at keying plants.

Do you have a favourite or most memorable sighting?

I searched for ferns in Aranda Bushland, but other than rock ferns, didn't find any. About a year ago, I was walking my dog on the House Trail in Aranda Bushland and just on the other side of a large fallen tree, I found a group of 4 fern species under the tree sheltered by other plants, their own little ecosystem. One of those ferns was locally rare. More recently, in another part of Aranda Bushland, I found another large fallen tree with several species of ferns tucked underneath - very similar to what I found close to the houses. Cath Busby, who is also a CNM moderator for orchids, had found those before. I thought it amusing that with over 100ha in Aranda Bushland, Cath and I stumbled across the same ferns. Ciaran and I have agreed to find a time to meet up so I can show him these treasures.



What do you love most about NatureMapr?

The moderators of course.

What do you see as the greatest value in NatureMapr and citizen science more broadly?

I think often citizen science has a bad rap as a bunch of wannabe scientists who don't have a clue. For me that was definitely true - I really didn't have a clue when I started adding sightings to NatureMapr. There are so many funny stories I could tell about my ignorance. But we have great moderators. It's the real strength of NatureMapr. Our moderators will not confirm a sighting unless they are confident of the species. Otherwise it is left unidentified. That is important and citizen science is more eyes on the ground and sometimes that results in amazing discoveries.

Thank you Lisa for sharing your NatureMapr story with us. You can find all of [Lisa's NatureMapr sightings](#) on CNM.

Please contact Lisa (username lbradley) if you can help her find an *Exocarpos strictus* in Aranda Bushland.

A new spider species

In case you're not up with the story, this previously unknown spider species was spotted last month in the Molonglo River Reserve. While many trapdoor spiders are known to taxonomists, this particular species has never been described. Due to numerous questions, a questions and answers was initiated.



Q. What is this species called?

A. It doesn't currently have one! We expect it'll be from the genus *Idiosoma*, but until it is described, it unlikely to receive a formal name. (Shout out to everyone who suggested Spider McSpiderface.)

Q. Why does it appear to have 10 legs?

A. Great spotting, everyone! This spider has two large 'Pedipalps' on either side of its mouth. These sensory appendages are used for communicating, catching and eating prey, and mating.

Q. How big is it?

A. We estimate the size as being approximately 3cm wide x 4cm long with the legs bunched up. That's roughly half the size of your credit card.

Q. Why is it balled up like that?

A. The spider is likely feeling threatened or just trying to balance on the stick. Don't worry: no spiders were harmed in the taking of these photos.

Q. What habitat does it like?

A. No-one really knows until research is undertaken, but it's unlikely it'll want to live in your lounge room. Trapdoor spiders are burrowing spiders who like quite dry climates. This particular individual was found in a dry, open grassy area.

See more photos on the [naturemapr web site](#) and thanks to [Wolfdogg](#) for finding this new spider.



World Environment Day

On Sunday 8 June 11 mappers and moderators got together to celebrate World Environment Day. We shared sightings and stories, and warmed up with drinks and cake.



In the foreground are Lisa Bradley on the left and Kim Pullen on the right, with Mike Sims behind Lisa and Michael Bedingfield behind Kim.

We'd love to hold social events like this regularly and we'll try to let everyone know when they're coming up. Please keep an eye out under the Events section of NatureMapr, in your email Inbox, and on Facebook for future event notifications.

Emma Collins

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