



Monthly Activity Morning January 17th 2015: 9:00 – 11:00 am

Attendance:

- Barbara, David, Frank, Helen, Nole, Regina, Subas, Sue, and Trevor

Morning Activities:

- Rubbish clean-up
- Wildlife photography (inclusive of January 14th evening)



Glimpses of the Day!



The highlight of the day was observing this beetle that I had never seen before, it is called the Pie-Dish Beetle (*Helea castor*). From its flat shape, larger size, (and hairy armour), it is obvious that it is a ground dwelling insect but based on the remnant spider webs on the “dish” and “hairs”, it is likely that this beetle was carried up by the spider to this short marri tree and was blown off during the hot and windy morning. It landed on top of this flower for a very short amount of time (hence slightly out of focus) before dropping on the ground and disappearing in the leaf litter below. I was actually focusing on the ants that are usually feeding on marri flowers but got extremely lucky to be at the right time at the right place.



Burton Legless Lizard (*Lialis sp.*) shot on January 14th warm summer evening. This lizard comes in a wide variety of colours but possess striking pattern of narrow black and white stripes. These snake-like lizards can grow upto almost 60 cm in length. On contrary to the common beliefs, legless lizards are non-venomous and totally harmless. These lizards are found on the outskirts of most urban centres including the Perth region and thrive in remnant bushland such as the Brixton reserve. These lizards exclusively prey upon other small reptiles such as the Fence Skink (*Cryptoblepharus sp.*) below.





I took this shot of two different lichens on January 14th around dusk. A lichen appears when the fungus and algae join together to form a new organism. The lichen looks different than the way the fungus or the algae looks by itself.

The form and colour of lichens are better observed during the relatively drier time of the year. There are two species of lichens on this branch. The orange one is conveniently named as the Orange Tree Lichen (*Xanthoria sp.*) and the green one is called the Common Green Shield (*Flavoparmelia sp.*).

The presence of orange tree lichen indicates that this tree is a favourite perch of birds as their droppings leave high concentrations of soluble nitrogen, which supports the growth of this particular species.

Although often overlooked, lichens play a valuable role in ecosystems. For example, birds are known to use dry lichens as a construction material for their nests and ants (as seen below) often feed on lichens as well.



A typical summer vista within the reserve – sprouting marri, dry ground foliage, the last of blooming Verticordia, and green eucalyptus trees [and dedicated and caring volunteers ... can you spot them?]

