



29 May 2015 Ken Walker (kwalker@museum.vic.gov.au) Museum Victoria. Edition 10.

Hi All – I’m a Queenslander and on Wednesday night was the first match of the annual Rugby League State of Origin series of 3 matches. But I wasn’t watching the game live as I had previously committed to give a talk about spiders to the Australian Plant Society in Boronia. I could not believe I had made such a commitment on this night. My next door neighbour is a “cockroach” (that’s Queensland’s friendly name for the NSW team and their supporters) and I told him that if I got home from my talk and all of his house lights were off, then I reckoned Queensland had won. Sure enough, not a light to be seen and Queensland had won 11 points to 10. I sat up until near 1am watching the game I had taped to find out the final score. In future, I will always consult the State of Origin fixtures before agreeing to give a talk. Actually, I had a fun night. My talk was well received and the “cane toads” (that’s NSW’s friendly name for the QLD team and their supporters) had won.

Oh yeah .. BowerBird ... had a great week as well. I am an amateur Facebook user and I have joined the Australian Amateur Entomology and Australian Native Bee groups so that I can assist with identifications. Many people post great images without providing a location so I am trying to change the data habits of Facebook subscribers to add spatial/temporal data to their records. My “gripe” about Facebook is that its data is not

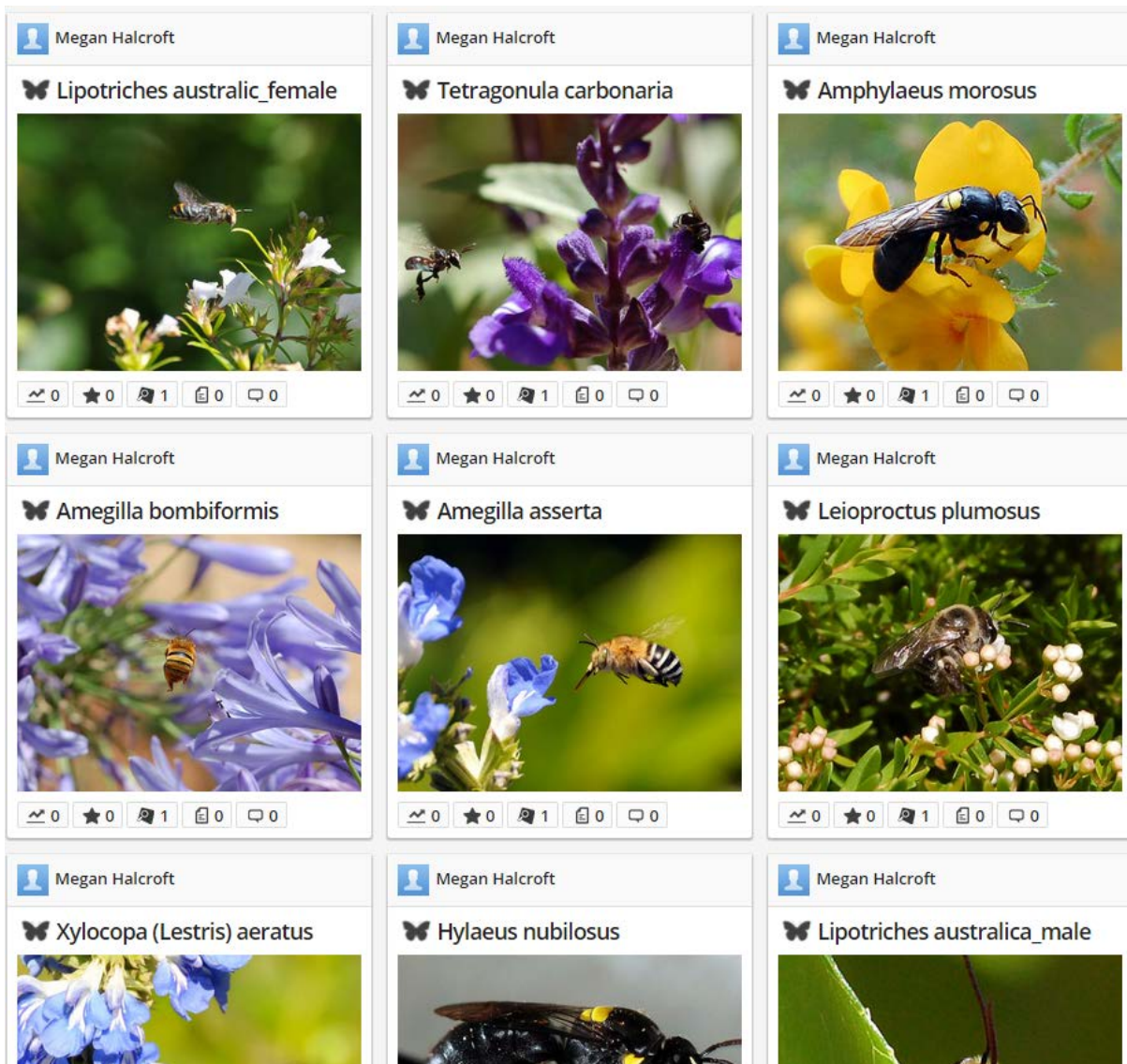
on-shared so the value of the image and identification remains trapped and “dies” within the Facebook record itself. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel as several Facebook members recently promoted BowerBird and suggested that once people had had their Facebook image identified that they then add the record to BowerBird ... and it has worked!



Several members of the Amateur Entomology and Australian Native Bee groups have now joined BowerBird and are now posting their records. This all adds to the diversity and variety of people and their records that we get on BowerBird – which I am really pleased to see. I have recently been involved with some initial chat about other citizen science websites having their unidentified records posted to BowerBird to seek identifications and returned to the original data source. Since many of these sites all post data to ALA (Atlas of Living

Australia), then the more identified records we send to ALA, the better appreciation we will have of our Australia fauna.

Two of the Facebook members have now joined BowerBird and are adding wonderful records. Megan Halcroft, posted 32 new bee records onto BowerBird which included some amazing images:



How good is this blue banded bee in-flight image?:















Or this “bee hotel” image: (Notice the green sealed hole below the bee)



Photos by Megan Halcroft

And, Erica Siegel has added 53 great records:

<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>White-eared Honeyeater - Li...</p>  <p>0 0 1 1 0</p>	<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>White-browed (Spotted) Scr...</p>  <p>0 0 0 1 0</p>	<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>Yellow-plumed Honeyeater -...</p>  <p>0 0 0 1 0</p>
<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>Grey Fantail - Rhipidura albi...</p>  <p>0 0 0 1 0</p>	<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>Red-capped Parrot - Purpur...</p>  <p>0 0 0 1 0</p>	<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>Inland Thornbill - Acanthiza ...</p>  <p>0 0 0 1 0</p>
<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>White-cheeked Honeyeater - ...</p>  <p>0 0 0 1 0</p>	<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>Western Spinebill, female - A...</p>  <p>0 0 0 1 0</p>	<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>Blue-breasted Fairy-wren - ...</p>  <p>1 0 0 2 0</p>
<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>Carnaby's Black Cockatoo / ...</p>  <p></p>	<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>Victoria's Riflebird, female</p>  <p>©Erica Siegel</p>	<p>Erica Siegel</p> <p>Grey-headed Robin</p>  <p></p>

Recently on Facebook, Erica told us that she had upgraded to a new camera with magnificent results:

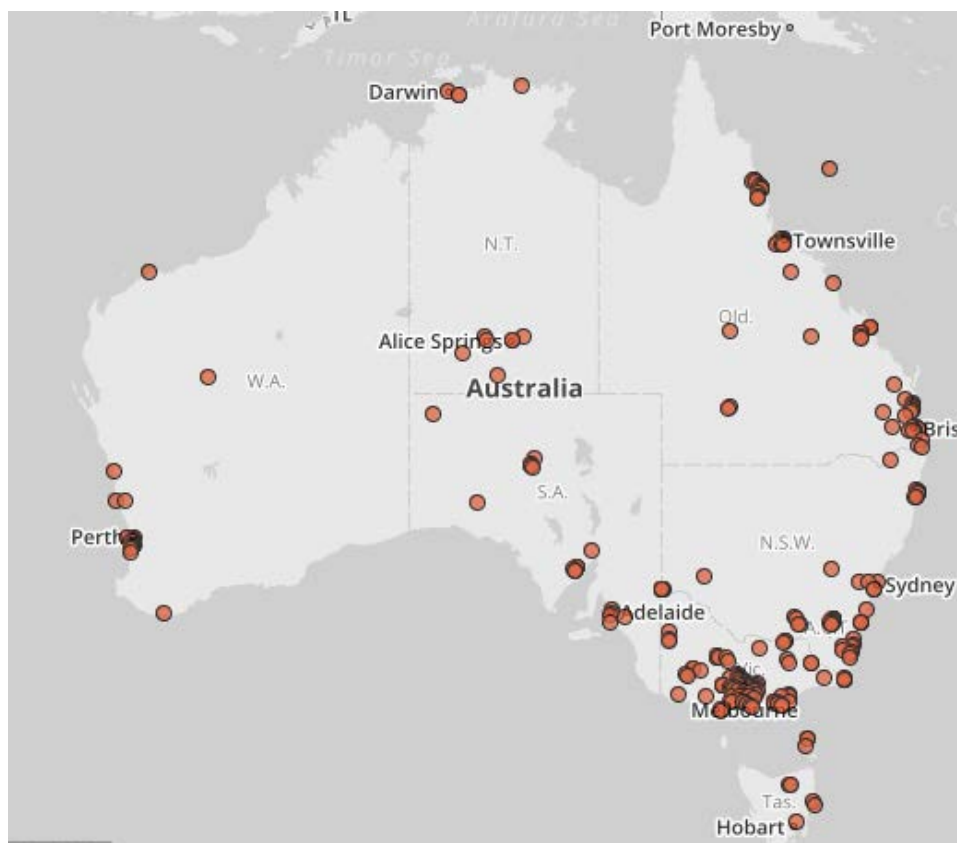


Photos by Erica Siegel

But, this week, I am going to pay tribute to the “twitchers” or those bird lovers amongst us. The main BowerBird “Bird-life” Project has 231 members who have uploaded 1,489 records ...



However, there are a total of 18 different bird Projects on BowerBird taking the total number of bird records to 1,849 - which have come in from around Australia. The ALA map below shows where BowerBird Bird records have been recorded. I find such maps very useful. Not only do they show where records have come from but also show where the gaps are.



The BowerBird Bird Projects cover a wide selection of interests. Here are but a few:

Melbourne Airport




The airport fringe vegetation and adjacent golf course provides a variety of habitat. Eurasian

Wetland Birds and Shorebirds



Document all the wetland birds and shorebirds that you see!

Birds SA Bird Identification



If you have seen any bird that you are unable to identify we will endeavour to make an id.

Townsville Birds




Pictures of the birds of Townsville.

Moir Drive Reserve, Roxburgh Park



Moir Drive Reserve is a small wetland adjacent to the rail line between Roxburgh Park and

Birds of Wilson Reserve

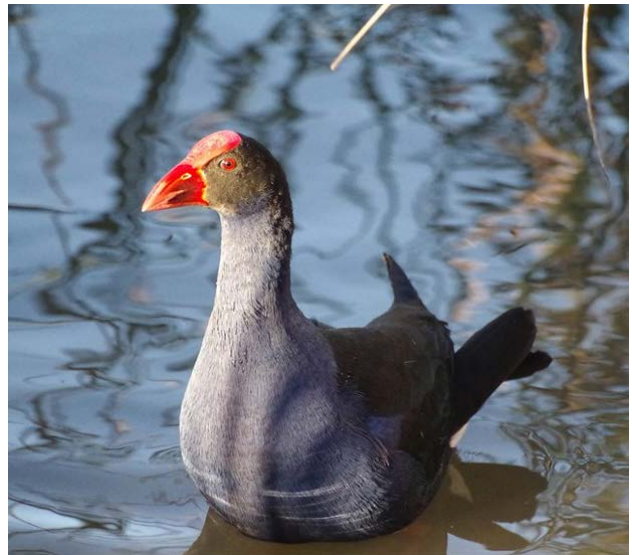


Birds of Wilson Reserve, Ivanhoe 3079

And, here is a mere selection of the wonderful bird images on BowerBird: (Personally, I am always amazed at the quality and clarity of the BowerBird images – just blows me away.)



Photos by Erica Siegel



Photos by Nerissa Turner



Photos by Adam Edmonds



Photos by Andrew Haysom



Photos by Anna Lanigan



Photos by Daniel Heald (By the way, the stunned bird (right) made a full recovery.)



Photos by David Akers



Photo by Dave Walter



Photos by David Francis

Speaking of me giving a spider talk during the week, for my multiple sins, I am also the curator of arachnology (spiders, ticks, mites, centipedes, millipedes, harvestmen etc) at the Museum.

BowerBird has a wonderful range of spider specimens from around Australia. I love the jumping spider images :



Photos by Mitch Smith



Photos by Andrea Lim

It's all to do with the timing

David Akers posted some wonderful images of a mass emergence of Hepialidae moths that occurred just after some rain two nights ago. It just so happened that Marilyn Hewish was volunteering in the Museum today and I know that she is working through our hepialid collection in preparation for writing a book on the Victorian fauna of these moths. Marilyn was able to place these moths to species -- *Oxycanus antipoda*.



Photos by David Akers

They make 'em fat !

Daniel Heald spotted this big, fat sawfly larva down at ground level. Based on the size of the larva and being near the ground, it has most likely finished feeding on eucalypt leaves and has crawled down to ground level and is heading underground to pupate.

That is one well fed, fat larva ready to overwinter and emerge as an adult next spring!

Daniel's most apt title for his record was:

Big Sawfly Grub



Photo by Daniel Heald

A follow up to a comment made last issue

Last issue, I commented that the 20,000+ BowerBird records now on ALA (Atlas of Living Australia) meant the cost ratio of BowerBird development funds to delivery of records to ALA was \$17.38. A few people have commented that sounds high.

Believe it or not, \$17 for a single identified biological record placed into the correct database (ie. ALA) is a reasonable cost.

At the Museum, we estimate the average staff cost to:

- Bring a collection item out of the collection and take it to a leased computer
- Type, print and cut out a registration card (eg. T-17896) for a single specimen and to attach it to a specimen
- Transcribe the specimen label data into a database
- Usually we need to enhance the dataset as old labels never have GPS coordinates which must be added
- Return the specimen to its correct collection place.
- This is for a dry specimen – double the costs if the specimen is stored in 70% alcohol. We use two people for alcohol specimens – one handling specimens and one on the computer.

The staff time cost per record is about \$7 (dry). Add another \$3 costs to cross check on AFD (Australian Faunal Directory) to ensure the name we add to the database is a valid name rather than an old synonymised name. And, we cannot easily put a cost for identification of the specimen. That comes to about \$10 per record without the costs of identification. Then there are additional IT costs to transfer the Museum records to ALA.

So, the BowerBird \$17 per record ON ALA ain't too shabby and will reduce per record with more uploads to BowerBird (:->!

Favourite image for the week ..

Another image from our favourite Victorian mallee farmer, Maree Goods – but, did she take this image while lying on her tummy or standing up? What I really liked about this image was the behavioural information Maree attached to the image – which I had never heard of before (remember this is a Cleptoparasite Cuckoo bee which sneaks into the nest of a Blue Banded bee, kills the egg or larva of the Blue Banded bee and then lays its own egg on the pollen ball made by the Blue Banded bee – gotta love nature!):

“This afternoon I was watching a blue banded bee going on the attack. Its target was the Cuckoo Bee. Each time the cuckoo bee went up into an eremophila flower the blue banded went in after it. If that wasn't enough there was war in the air at times.” Thanks Maree !



I love reading a good story on BowerBird ..

Ethan Beaver is a young naturalist who has posted only 9 records to BowerBird but the quality of the specimens suggests to me that he has bred the specimens through – Cairns Birdwing, Hercules Moth, Dingy Swallowtail etc.

Yesterday, Ethan posted the below image *Anthela ochroptera* accompanied by this story:

“Male specimen eclosed from pupa 28/May/2015, after being collected as a larva from Port Augusta in late 2014. The larva consumed an unidentified species of grass, and was extremely hairy with grey, white and black bands running across each segment. The hairs are shed easily, and can lodge themselves in skin.”

I love the way people are using BowerBird to tell viewers something about what they have photographed and uploaded to share.



Photo by Ethan Beaver.

Fungal images from this week ...

Plasmodiums on wood ..



Photo by Teresa and John

Cordyceps are out !!

Cordyceps gunnii



Cordyceps robertsii



Photos by Matt Campbell

Slime mould sporangia (Trichiaceae family)



Who could not but think of Noddy and BigEars with this photo:



Photos by Matt Campbell

Puffballs



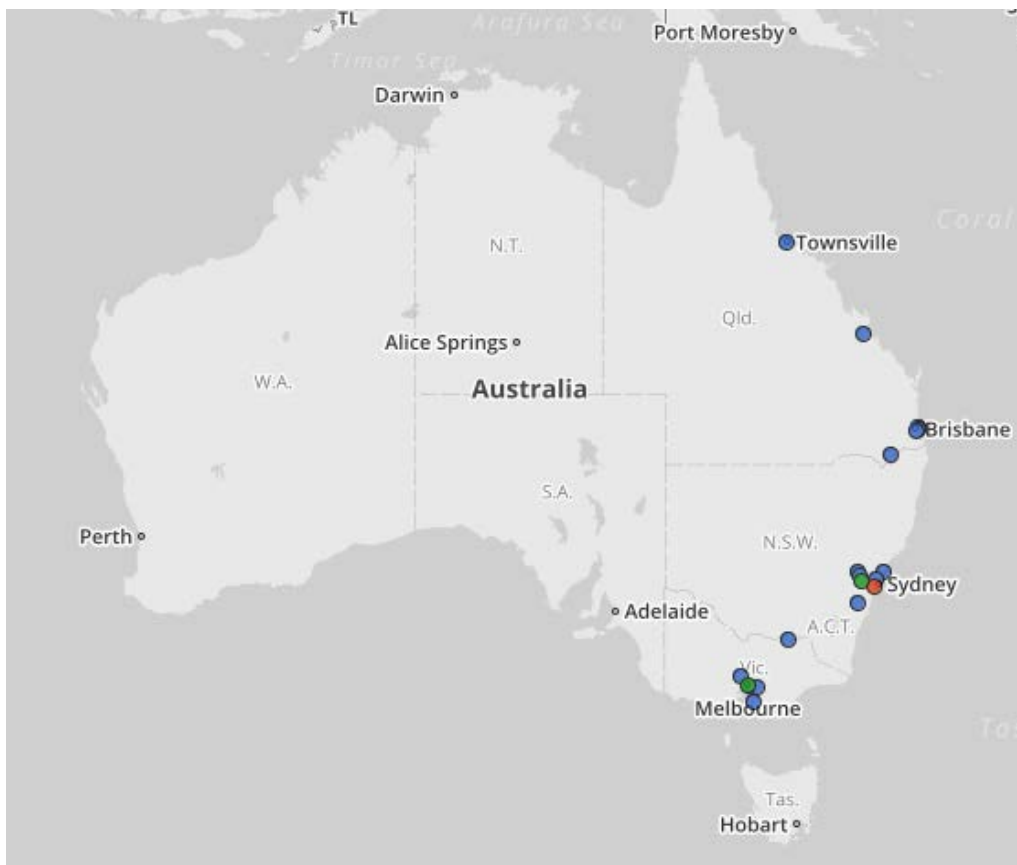
Photos by Matt Campbell

And, finally – The life cycle captured !!

Jean and Fred Hort (that dynamic duo from the West) seem to find that most amazing things which to photograph. If you have time, make a cup of tea and type into Google “Flickr Jean and Fred Hort” then sit back and be amazed at what this couple has photographically documented. Well, this week, they added a cracker to BowerBird. The larvae and adult of a WA sawfly –

The sawfly has the scientific name of *Lophyrotoma analis*. Not only is this the first record for this species in WA but also the first record for the entire genus in WA – WOW! **The Blue dots on the maps are BowerBird records!!!** Next week’s ALA map will have the WA record from Jean and Fred.

Jean and Fred are tremendous naturalists and know the value of additional data so they added to their images: “Larvae on Patterson's Curse”.



And here is the ALA data attribution table – Go BowerBird !

Refine your search ×

	Dataset	Count
<input type="checkbox"/>	BowerBird	17
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encyclopedia of Life Images - Flickr Group	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual Sightings	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Museum Victoria provider for OZCAM	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	OZ Animals	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Steve Dew's Aussiecreatures	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	iNaturalist	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Australian Museum provider for OZCAM	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	NatureShare	1

So, here are Jean and Fred's sawfly adult and larval images:





Photos by Jean and Fred Hort

Haveagoodweekend all Happy photographing ...

Cheers – Ken

(If you wish to leave this email list, please contact me directly at
kwalker@museum.vic.gov.au – else share with your friends)