

# The BowerBird Bugle

17 April 2015 Ken Walker ([kwalker@museum.vic.gov.au](mailto:kwalker@museum.vic.gov.au)) Museum Victoria. Edition 4.

I never cease to be amazed at the serendipitous nature of where and how records come to appear on BowerBird. Last Friday, I received an email from the curator of entomology at the Queensland Museum (QM), Dr Christine Lambkin. (If anyone watched the recent ABC doco called “The Great Australian Fly” Christine was the “fly-girl” ... in the nicest possible way ...) Anyhow, Christine was replying to a public enquiry the QM received from Glenda and Christine began her reply with: “How did you get that? Rare as hen’s teeth!” We insect curators tend to get excited when seeing something very rare.

The story goes that Glenda and her partner were driving through the Ravensbourne National Park in SE Qld – just west of Brisbane.



As they drove along, a fly flew into the car and landed on the inside windscreen. It was a big fly with a wingspan of about 8cm so it certainly caught the eye of the people in the car. Glenda, who was sitting on the passenger seat at the time, took a picture of the fly and gently herded the fly out the window of the car – AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH !!!

On return to Brisbane, her curiosity led Glenda to email the image to the QM's Discovery Centre for identification.

Below is Glenda's image – the first known live image of this extremely rare fly species.

The fly is a "Tangled-vein" fly belonging to the family Nemestrinidae and in the monotypic genus *Nycterimorpha speiseri* Lichtwardt, 1909. I do hope everyone has taken off their hats and are nodding appropriately. That's a hen's tooth!



Photo by Glenda Walter

In Christine's reply email to Glenda, she suggested that her image should be uploaded to BowerBird so that it could be shared and further uploaded to ALA. I chimed in with an email "plea" to Glenda to release the image. At one stage there, Glenda had the senior insect curators of two state Museums down on bended knee. Glenda agreed and the rest is history.

## **Why do people take on enormous tasks?**

The recently passed Malcom Fraser once famously quipped: "Life wasn't meant to be easy" but some people are just buggers for punishment. If you want to make life difficult for yourself, you first develop an interest in beetles – one in every 5 known animals in the world is a beetle. There are over 500,000 described beetles in the world compared to the entire known world plant Kingdom which contains a mere 250,000 known species. If you really want pain, then you work on weevils but closely followed behind are the leaf-eating Chrysomelids of which Australia has about 3,000. One of the leaf-eating groups is called the "Paropsine" beetles. As a curator of entomology, I "hate" paropsine beetles. When live, they are the most wonderfully coloured beetle but when dead and on a pin they all turn a "baby-poo" brown colour. Identification of live specimens from museum specimens is almost impossible so the best method is to find them live and image capture them. Two BowerBird members, with more courage than good sense, Martin Lagerwey and Geoff Walker, have taken on the task of image capturing the paropsine beetle of Australia. I doff my proverbial hat to them. Fortunately, there are a few professional entomologists willing and able to offer advice but many many hours has and will be spent by this pair of enthusiast documenting their form of the "holy grail". And, as a tribute to these charismatic beetles and their documenter, I

offer this BowerBird photo-montage: These and many more can be viewed here: <http://www.bowerbird.org.au/users/1955/sightings>









All photos by Martin Lagerwey.

And ..... Just to mix thing up a bit, this dynamic duo also take images of jewel beetles ... BUT ! .... just as a hobby .....



Photo by Martin Lagerwey.

Oh well, as they “It gets them out of the house and off the streets!” (:->!

I have more than a couple of favourite images from this week:



Speaking of dynamic duos, Fred and Jean Hort from WA posted these wonderful wasp images. Perhaps after appreciating the aesthetic beauty of the images, you will begin to realise you are looking at yet another “hen’s tooth”. Once again, this is the first ever live image taken of this entire genus of about 5 species of wasps and the first record on ALA. It is a eumeninae Potter wasp in the family Vespidae and is: *Rhynchium magnificentum*. WOW!



Photos by Fred and Jean Hort

And, back to Maree Goods in central western Victoria. Maree was again prostrate on her stomach at “ye old” bird bath (but only for a short while she says .....).

I love the way this image captures the “bending” of the water around the tarsi with the minute weight of the insect. It is also sucking up a drink.



Photo by Maree Goods.

And talking about the battle weary .... This hylaeine bee has been in the wars and lost its right antenna and right foreleg ... Maybe bird attack?

We call her “hoppy” for short!



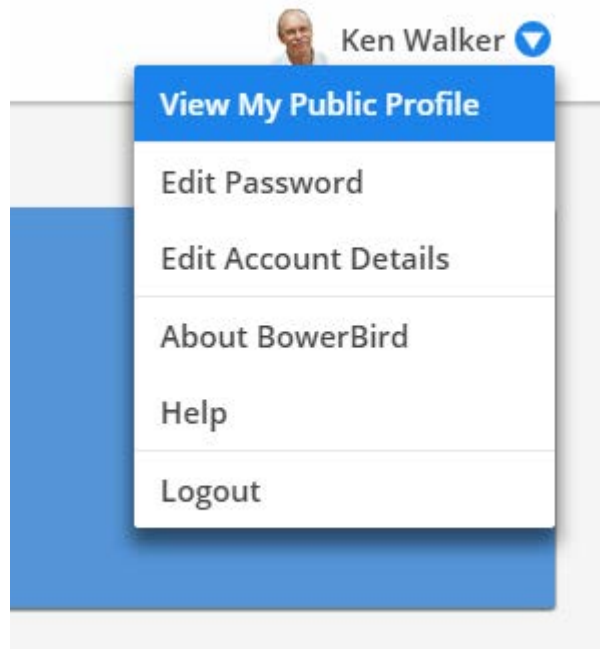
Photos by Rudie Kuitert

# BowerBird Tip

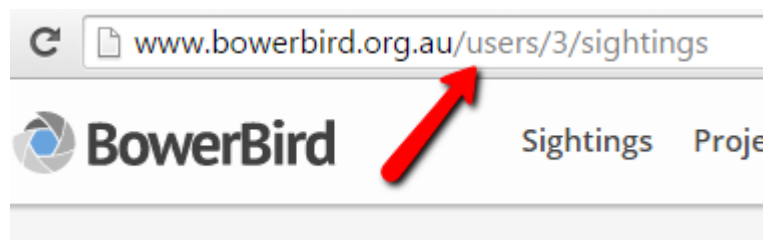
Did you know that you can view just the images you have uploaded and the records you have responded to? Here's how:

In the top right corner of the web page is your Login name. Click the blue down arrow and then click the line:

“View My Public Profile”



Each BowerBird web page has its own unique URL. When showing my records, the web browser displays the URL for this web page. You can send this URL to anyone in an email and they too can view your BowerBird efforts. (I was the third person to register on BowerBird !! after the two programmers!)



The weather has cooled and a few showers have arrived which means its:

# FUNGUS TIME !

Lyn Cook spotted these fungal protuberances emerging from this enormous termite mound on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2015 near the Western Creek State Forest in SE Qld.



Photos by Lyn Cook.

And Matt Campbell spotted this “Split Gill” mushroom last week near Churchill Victoria:

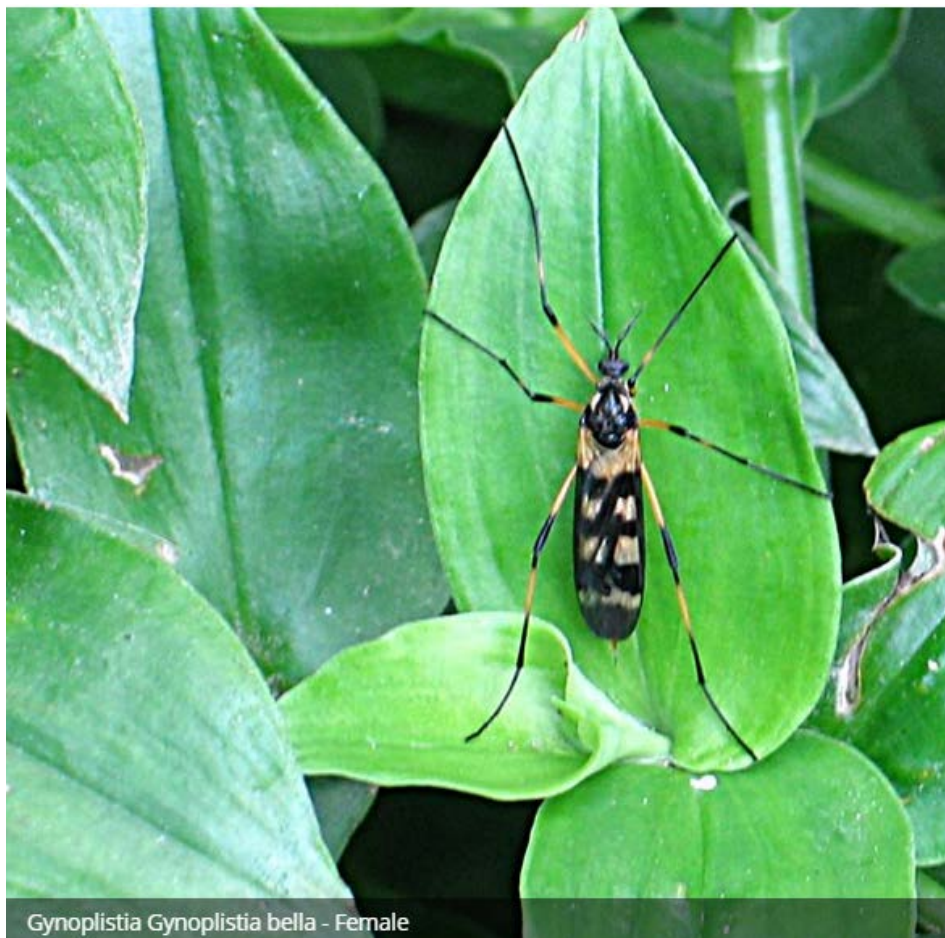


Photo by Matt Campbell.

Finally, a new BowerBird project caught my eye – “Craneflies of Australia”. It already has 116 sightings with only 3 members. If you photograph a crane fly, then you now have a new home for it. Join up and contribute.



A banner for the "Craneflies of Australia" project. It features a small square image of a crane fly against a blue background. Below the image, the title "Craneflies of Australia" is written in white. Underneath the title, there are three dark grey boxes containing the text "3 Members", "116 Sightings", and "0 Posts".



# Happy fungus hunting.

This image popped up just as I was finalising this edition. To good not to share.

Taken on 13th April 2015, south of Churchill, Victoria.



Photo by David Akers.

Haveagoodweekend ....

Cheers – Ken

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