

Lofty Plans Came to Earth

At age 12, in his backyard in West Footscray, David Farrar was keen to give flying a go, like the legendary Icarus. 'I made myself a wooden frame, attached a pair of polystyrene wings, got up on the roof of one shed and tried to fly to the other'.

Like Icarus, he came to earth with a bang, ending up in the chook shed in a tangle of chicken wire and feathers. 'It was then I decided to lower my sights, understanding that it's safer watching birds from below'.

Forty years later, David still finds himself fascinated by nature's wonders and birds still top the list. You might spot him whale watching at Walkerville, or monitoring cormorants at Bird Rock, or stopped by the side of the road after some chance sighting.

David always travels with his tools of trade: a good telescope with a collapsible camera tri-

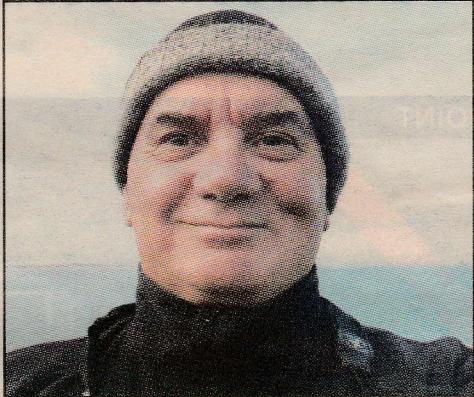
pod, state of the art binoculars, a camera, a notebook and pencil.

After thirty years' experience as an environmental parks ranger, and thanks to his enormous collection of natural history books, he has built up a wealth of knowledge about birds, animals, plants and land management.

His enthusiastic participation in the Prom Area Climate Action (PACA) Nature 4 Neighbourhoods project reflects his passion for creating greater biodiversity both at home and in our local areas.

We might not be able to change the world, but we can certainly change what we do ourselves. 'I love inspiring people to see something new, to get them interested in taking new directions'.

David has owned his mud brick house in Walkerville for a decade. There he has created an



• David Farrar

amazing haven for wildlife, but wants 'to do...and learn even more, especially about the role of insects'.

He has planted fifty more shrubs and grasses and a few trees, resulting in increasing numbers of resident and visiting birds and animals: from 58 in 2010 to 178 by 2020, and counting. Small dense shrubs, in particular, provide shelter for small birds and animals.

David loves having skinks in the garden and has wonderful suggestions for creating special 'skink apartments' to encourage their presence. Why skinks, you might ask? These lizards, of the Scincidae family, are fantastic pest-controlling hunters.

Having trouble with snails? Blue tongue lizards love them. The common garden skink has a taste for centipedes.

Importantly, skinks are also preyed upon by birds. So if you want to encourage more birds into your garden, it makes sense to provide a warm welcome to skinks.

David's sense of urgency about the need for action on the climate crisis led him to join Prom Area Climate Action (PACA) associated with the Australian Conservation Foundation. 'I've always valued the ACF, and am impressed by the fact that it has attracted more than 600,000 members and supporters'.

He relishes the sense of community

he finds in PACA, and interacting with people who believe in working together to bring about positive change.

With the loss of more than 1 billion animals in Australia's most recent bushfires, on top of the ongoing extinction crisis for so many of our animals and plants, there has never been a more important time to do what we can to provide suitable habitat for local and refugee species, thus enriching our own backyards and lives.

If you're keen to discover more of David's great tips for increasing the biodiversity on your property, you can watch his webinar presentation 'Creating Habitat in Your Backyard', by accessing the Prom Area Climate Action website: www.promareaclimateaction.org

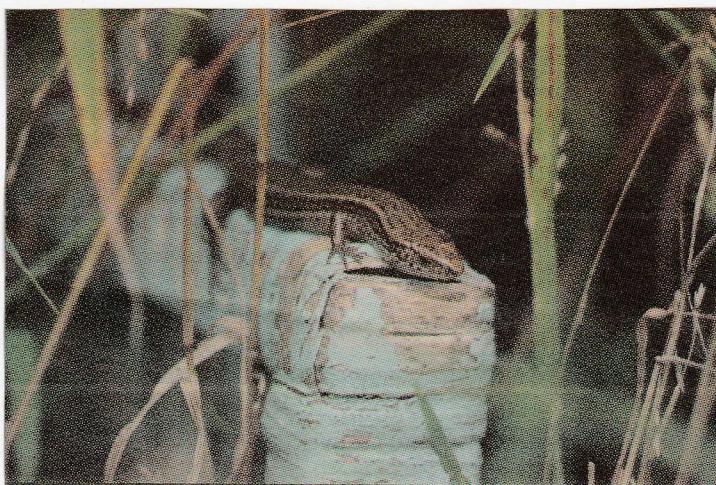
Click on the News and you will see the Webinars links.

If you would like to join Prom Area Climate Action please write to us at promareaclimateaction@gmail.com

Jan Stoller
Yanakie



• Pictured above is an insect hotel he built to attract skinks.



• Pictured above is a skink he attracted.

The Mirror 7.10.20