



Canberra Nature Map: citizen science and the important role you can play

Michael Mulvaney and Aaron Clausen

ACT Planning & Environment Directorate and Canberra Nature Map

Canberra Nature Map establishes a direct link between passionate amateur citizen scientists and the professionals. Originally established to collate ACT rare plant records, from about 150 people with a range of expertise, including novices, it has now moved on to cover all plants, fungi, snakes, frogs, lizards, butterflies and birds of the wider ACT region. It receives over 1000 visits a day, and currently 350 new records are added a week. An observation is reported by uploading an image from a smartphone or GPS enabled camera. The GPS location, date and author are automatically obtained during the upload. An observer also records abundance data and can suggest identification or leave it as unknown. Forty experts moderate data entry and species identification for either a particular area (e.g. Black Mountain) or a plant or animal group (e.g. ferns, butterflies). An observer is notified by email once an identification is confirmed. Various mapping and database tools enable contributors to track their own records, view species distributions, or receive records for a particular reserve. In the first two years, 14,000 records have been lodged, including 3500 well validated rare plant locations (40% of the total number of records from the last 100 years). Identifications include dozens of plants not reported in the ACT for at least 50 years, first-time records of high-risk weeds and new populations of rare ACT endemic species. Canberra Nature Map provides a photographic library of ACT's wildlife and a great way of improving general public and land manager information on the distribution and abundance of wildlife in our bush capital and region. Canberra Nature Map is at <http://canberranaturemap.org/>.

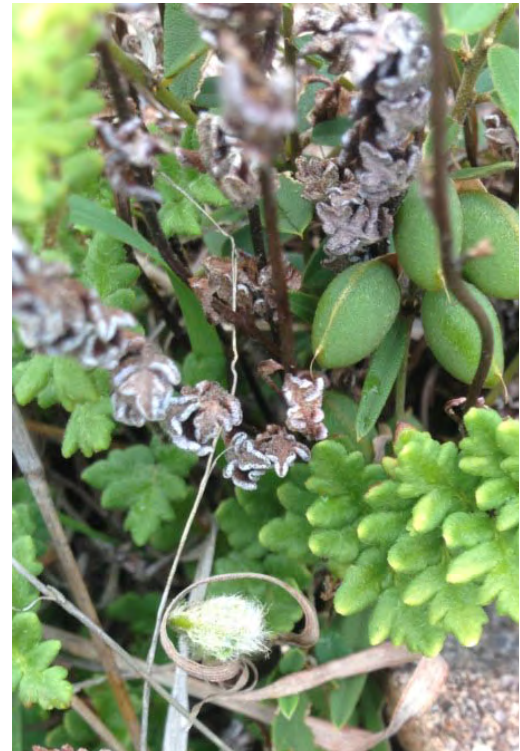


Above: *Sanguisorba minor* subsp. *muricata*. Salad Burnet, Sheep's Burnet at Pine Island to Point Hut, ACT.

<http://canberranaturemap.org/Community/Sighting/1973978>

Right: *Cheilanthes distans*. Bristly Cloak Fern at Urambi Hills, ACT.

<http://canberranaturemap.org/Community/Sighting/1948190>



Aaron Clausen has worked in the IT industry for over 15 years with a focus on web and application architecture. His experience has included senior executive roles such as Chief Technology Officer at the Australian Trade Commission. He loves innovating through the use of software, and using technology to solve everyday problems. In 2014 Aaron was selected to join the University of Melbourne's Asialink leaders program. Aaron holds a bachelor of Computer Science from the University of Newcastle. Previously, he founded hunterhomes.com.au which was acquired by All Homes Pty Ltd in 2013.

Dr Michael Mulvaney is Senior Conservation Officer in the ACT Directorate of Planning and Environment and provides advice to the ACT Conservator of Flora and Fauna involving planning and development decisions that may affect biodiversity. Michael has also been a leading volunteer in ACT conservation, particularly with Red Hill Regenerators ParkCare Group. Michael's PhD involved weeds research.