



Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

BULLETIN

Editor: Beth Heap bul.editor@tasfieldnats.org.au

Quarterly Bulletin

No 353

January 2014

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. People of any age and background are welcome as members.

For more information, visit website <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>; email info@tasfieldnats.org.au; write to GPO Box 68, Hobart, 7001; or phone our secretary on (03)62278638.

We welcome articles and interesting photos for the Bulletin. If you would like to contribute to the next edition, please email the editor with your article or photos by 15 March.

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Program

General Meetings start at **7.15 pm** for 7.30 pm on the first Thursday of the month and feature a guest speaker on natural history (no meetings or excursions in January). Meetings are held in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania.

Excursions are usually held the following Saturday or Sunday, meeting at 9.00 am outside the Museum in Macquarie St, Hobart. Bring lunch and all-weather outdoor gear. If you are planning to attend an outing, but have not been to the prior meeting, please confirm the details on the club website as late changes are sometimes made.

| | |
|---|---|
| Thurs 6 Feb | Guest Speaker: Els Wakefield, <i>Migratory and Resident Shorebirds</i> |
| Sat 8 Feb | Excursion: Orielton Lagoon. Meet outside the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery on Macquarie Street, Hobart at 9am |
| Thurs 6 Mar | President's address: Greg Heap, <i>A Top Place to Live</i> Book Launch: <i>A Field Guide to Tasmanian Fungi</i> (Club member discounts!) Annual General Meeting will follow the president's address and book launch. |
| Thurs 3 Apr | Guest Speaker: Sue Robinson, <i>Rainbow Lorikeets in Tasmania</i> |
| 18-20 Apr | Easter Camp – Valley Campus (Fawltly Towers) Fingal valley |
| 18-26 Oct | Australian Naturalists Network get-together 2014 at the Lea http://tasfieldnats.weebly.com/australian-naturalists-network.html |
| For details of talks and excursions beyond this date, please check the website at http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/ | |

Subs due now

A reminder that 2014 subs were due on 1 January - please keep your treasurer happy by paying now!

Subs can be paid by cheque to the Club address, by Paypal (follow the links on our website <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>) or by EFT to the Club account BSB 067 102 A/c 2800 0476.

Please identify your payment with your name and initial.

Family \$35

Single \$30

Single Junior or Concession \$25

Lauderdale Saltmarsh Excursion August 2013

Amanda Thomson

Though cold, the weather was kind to the 14 members who attended.



Field nats group at Lauderdale. Photo: Amanda Thomson

Our trip leader Vishnu Prahalad, whose enthusiasm was infectious, defined each region by its level of salinity and inundation and plants by their ability to tolerate salt and whether they have drainage. He stressed the importance of saltmarsh communities as part of a larger ecosystem and gave detailed information on the interaction of plant and animal species - such as the fish (flathead) which come to spawn in the saltmarsh.

The Dorans Road site had significantly larger bush and shrub species which supported lots of insects, spiders (including Nursery web spiders) and marine creatures (polychaete worm).

Nursery web spiders, *Dolomedes* sp. resemble Wolf spiders. They carry their egg sacs with their jaws and pedipalps, then when about to hatch they construct a silk tent in grasses/ reeds which they guard till the spiderlings emerge. Quite a large spider, many can walk on water, and dive to catch their prey – worms, tadpoles and other insects.

Race Course Flats Saltmarsh is a quite spectacular marsh-like area with ponds and some *Juncus* sp. *Sarcocornia* sp., *Disphyma* and bare ground.



Race Course Flats. Photo: Amanda Thomson

We spent a fascinating day inspecting an important vegetation type we tend to overlook.



Sarcocornia blackiana. Photo: Geoff Carle

Interesting finds were lots of spiders at the Dorans Road site, orb webs full of tiny flying insects; a Polychete worm found by Geoff Fenton; caterpillar; Geometrid moth in the more treed area on the boundary; Common Froglet and small jumping spider.



Pygmy Jumping Spider. Photo: Kristi Ellingsen

The interesting list of birds supplied by Els Wakefield included 24 species plus a rooster and a starling slightly out of their usual habitat! Listed in order of appearance:

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Brown Falcon | Grey Butcherbird |
| Forest Raven | Sea Eagle |
| Superb Fairy Wren | Noisy Miner |
| Masked Lapwing | Common Starling |
| Australasian Pipit | Eurasian Skylark |
| Kelp Gull | Black-fronted Dotterel |
| Pied Oystercatcher | White-fronted Chat |
| Green Rosella | White-backed Magpie |
| Brown Thornbill | Black Swan |
| Chestnut Teal | Silver Gull |
| Red-necked Stint | Red-capped Plover |
| Double-banded Plover | |

Pardalote sp. (I did not see it and it could have been either Spotted or Striated as they have the same contact call unless breeding).

Plant species List: Salt Marshes Lauderdale – Supplied by Annabel Carle
Sunday August 4th 2013 (excludes larger woody plants)

Lauderdale Race Course Flats Saltmarsh (Degraded saltmarsh - Brackish)

| Group | Family | Scientific name | Common Name |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Monocotyledons | Cyperaceae | <i>Ficinia nodosa</i> | Knobby club-sedge |
| | | <i>Gahnia filum</i> | Chaffy saw-sedge |
| | Juncaceae | <i>Juncus kraussii</i> | Sea rush |
| | Poaceae | <i>Austrostipa stipoides</i> | Prickly spear-grass |
| | | <i>Distichlis distichophylla</i> | Australian Salt-grass |
| | | <i>Puccinellia stricta</i> | Australian saltmarsh-grass |
| | | + other <i>Poaceae</i> species | |
| Dicotyledons | Aizoaceae | <i>Carpobrotus rossii</i> | Karkalla |
| | | <i>Disphyma crassifolium</i> | Rounded noon-flower (Dominant species) |
| | | <i>Tetragonia implexicoma</i> | Bower spinach |
| | Asteraceae | <i>Vellereophyton dealbatum</i> | White cudweed |
| | Chenopodiaceae | <i>Atriplex paludosa</i> | Marsh saltbush |
| | | <i>Rhagodia candolleana</i> | Sea berry saltbush |
| | | <i>Suaeda australis</i> | Austral seablite |
| | | <i>Sarcocornia blackiana</i> | Thick-head glasswort (dominant) |
| | | <i>Tecticornia arbuscula</i> | Shrubby glasswort (low numbers) |
| | Caryophyllaceae | <i>Spergularia sp</i> | Sand-spurrey (often present in degraded saltmarsh) |
| | Convolvulaceae | <i>Wilsonia backhousei</i> | Narrow-leaf Wilsonia |
| | Goodeniaceae | <i>Selliera radicans</i> | Shiny swamp-mat |
| | Malvaceae | <i>Lawrenzia spicata</i> | Salt Lawrenzia |

Dorans Road, Lauderdale (Healthy Saltmarsh)

| Group | Family | Scientific name | Common Name |
|-----------------------|----------------|---|--|
| Monocotyledons | Cyperaceae | <i>Gahnia filum</i> | Chaffy saw-sedge |
| | Juncaceae | <i>Juncus kraussii</i> | Prickly spear-grass |
| | Poaceae | <i>Austrostipa stipoides</i> | Sea rush |
| | | <i>Distichlis distichophylla</i> | Australian Salt-grass |
| | | <i>Puccinellia stricta</i> | Australian saltmarsh-grass |
| | | + other <i>Poaceae</i> species | |
| | Typhaceae | <i>Typha sp</i> | Bulrush |
| Dicotyledons | Aizoaceae | <i>Carpobrotus rossii</i> | Karkalla |
| | | <i>Disphyma crassifolium</i> | Rounded noon-flower |
| | | <i>Tetragonia implexicoma</i> | Bower spinach |
| | | <i>*Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> | Boneseed (weeded out where possible!) |
| | Asteraceae | <i>Vellereophyton dealbatum</i> | White cudweed |
| | Chenopodiaceae | <i>Atriplex paludosa</i> | Marsh saltbush |
| | | <i>Suaeda australis</i> | Austral seablite |
| | | <i>Sarcocornia blackiana</i> | Thick-head glasswort (more dominant in winter) |
| | | <i>Sarcocornia quinqueflora</i> (brown) | Beaded glasswort (Dominant species - green in summer) |
| | | <i>Tecticornia arbuscula</i> | Shrubby glasswort (dominant vegetation) |
| | Convolvulaceae | <i>Wilsonia backhousei</i> | Narrow-leaf Wilsonia |
| | Goodeniaceae | <i>Selliera radicans</i> | Shiny swamp-mat |
| | Malvaceae | <i>Lawrenzia spicata</i> | Salt Lawrenzia |
| | Primulaceae | <i>Samolus repens</i> | Creeping Brookweed – Important saltmarsh plant |

Tasmanian Bushland Gardens Excursion

David Ratkowsky

The October outing of the TFNC (Saturday, 5 October 2013) to the Tasmanian Bushland Gardens near Buckland got off to an inauspicious start, with two of our members not showing up at the meeting place (the Museum) at the agreed starting time. They had put their trust in Metro Tasmania to get them to the Museum on time, but the trust placed in the company previous known as the Metropolitan Transport Trust turned out to be misplaced, as the bus never showed up, despite the service being listed in Metro's official timetable. However, thanks to the modern communication device, the mobile phone, text messages were used to make the necessary contact with the Club members who had arranged to give them a lift, and all turned out well in the end.

The outing was attended by 12 people, Sheila Beamish, Kevin Bonham, Annabel Carle, Geoff Carle, Genevieve Gates, Vern Hansson, Beth Heap, Greg Heap, David Ratkowsky, Amanda Thomson, Abbey Throssell, Margaret Warren, all of whom completed a round-trip circuit on a well-constructed track that had a short ascent to a summit and a steep descent to a river.



Dry sclerophyll forest. Photo: Genevieve Gates



Grey fantail. Photo: Vern Hansson

The following birds were observed (list contributed by Vern Hansson):

Australian Magpie
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Common Blackbird
Eastern Spinebill
Forest Raven
Golden Whistler
Grey Fantail
New Holland Honeyeater
Silvereye
Striated Pardalote
Superb Fairywren
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo.

The record of the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo has to be considered a first for the Tasmanian Bushland Gardens, the species not having been recorded on any of seven previous lists dating back to 2004.



Striated pardalote Photo: Abbey Throssell

The following snail species were observed (list and comments by Kevin Bonham):

Tasmaphena ruga
Prolesophanta nelsonensis
Pernagera tasmaniae
Punctidae sp "Micro Cripps"
Paralaoma sp "Knocklofty"
Planilaoma-like charopid sp.

Exotic species: *Oxychilus cellarius*, *O. alliarius*, *Microxeromagna lowei*, *Vitrina pellucida*.

The diversity of native snails was a bit lower than expected. The carnivorous exotic *Oxychilus* may have had some impact on species numbers. The undescribed charopid belongs to a tricky group of forms present in the east and the southern midlands.

The diversity of fungi was even lower than that of snails, with only five species recorded (list contributed by Genevieve Gates):

Agaricus 'large brown scaly, yellowing'

Gymnopus aff. *dryophila*

Hygrocybe astatogala

Porpoloma 'grey'

Laetiporus portentosus (dead)

The following butterfly species were observed (list and comments by Abbey Throssell):

Bright copper - *Paralucia aurifer*

Two-spotted grass-skipper - *Pasma tasmanicus*

Australian painted lady - *Vanessa kershawi*

Australian admiral - *Vanessa itea*



Paralucia aurifer (Bright Copper) Photo: Abbey Throssell

The bright copper is regarded as common but local, restricted to areas where its food plant (*Bursaria spinosa*) grows.

Federation Weekend Port Sorell Oct 2013

Beth Heap

The Federation weekend in October was hosted by the Central North Field Naturalists. A large contingent of Hobart Field Nats made the trip up to Port Sorell for the event. Most camped in huts at Camp Banksia, where we enjoyed a BBQ and quiz night on the Friday evening and an Indian Banquet on Saturday night together with a very informative talk by Phil Collier – *Managing threatened species in the Port Sorell area*.

Two excursions had been organized for Saturday. The first was to see the conservation work carried out by Phil Collier and Robyn Garnett on their beautiful property, Rubicon Sanctuary.



A guided tour of Rubicon Sanctuary. Photo: Beth Heap



Caladenia alata at Rubicon Sanctuary. Photo: Beth Heap

In the afternoon, the group visited Hawley Reserve primarily to try to get an estimate of the *Spyridium obcordatum* population in the reserve. A decline in the number of mature plants was noted since counting started in 2011 and an increase in the number of seedlings. For more details about this project, see the following by Phil Collier and Robyn Garnett:-

<http://www.disjunctnaturalists.com/articles2/spyridium-obcordatum.pdf>



Spyridium obcordatum. Photo: Abbey Throssell



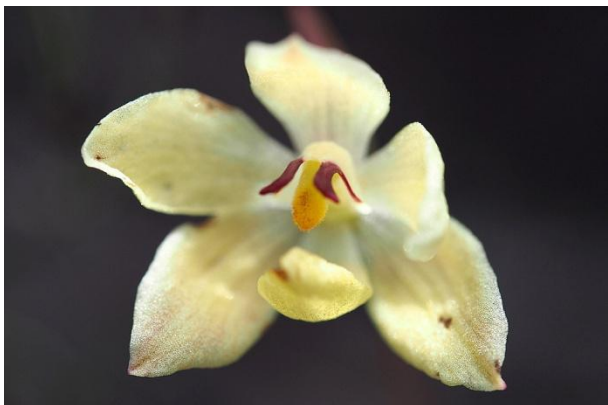
Orange-spotted ladybird (*Orcus australasiae*)
Photo: Abbey Throssell

Greg and I visited Hawley House and were delighted to see a number of green and gold frogs (*Litoria raniformis*) in the ponds there.



Green and gold frog at Hawley House. Photo: Beth Heap

We spent Sunday morning at Narawntapu National Park looking for *Thelymitra antennifera* (rabbit ears sun orchid) and although the weather was partly cloudy, we managed find some open.



Thelymitra antennifera. Photo: Abbey Throssell

We had a picnic lunch at the national park before heading home. Thanks to the Central North Field Naturalists for organizing a very interesting and enjoyable weekend.

Fungi species observed at Rubicon Sanctuary (list supplied by Genevieve Gates)

Coltricia australica

Lichenomphalia chromacea

Psilocybe sp.

Bolbitius vitellinus [= *Bolbitius titubans*]

Gymnopus aff. *dryophilus*

Cortinarius sp.

Descolea recedens

Marasmius elegans

Laccaria sp.

Entoloma sp. nov. (yellow-brown fruitbody with brown margin to the gills)

Snail Report from Kevin Bonham

Of the three outings on the Federation weekend the one where I had the best results was the trip to the dolerite hill in Hawley Reserve. Many of the invertebrates I saw there (mostly beetles) were unfamiliar to me. I found just three species of snail on this outing but one was very interesting because it was a *Scelidoropa* (formerly *Pernagera*) very similar to the species *tamarensis*. *Scelidoropa* is a genus of small (usually <5 mm) flattish snails that often have a colour pattern of red and white rays; Tasmania has about fifteen species of them. *tamarensis* was described from a site in what is now Invermay in Launceston, where it occurred locally and the population is probably now extinct. Snails with shells identical to *tamarensis* occur on King Island and in southern Victoria, but as we cannot dissect the original *tamarensis* we cannot be sure if they are the same thing or not. If they are, then it's possible the type population of *tamarensis* was introduced. For a while I'd been aware of a small number of 19th-century *tamarensis*-like specimens from Port Sorell, but this was my first chance to look in the area. I found that this snail was in fact abundant at one of the two dolerite rock shelf sites we searched and in the surrounding dense dry forest.

On examining the shells of the Hawley specimens closely, I have found that there are slight but rather consistent differences to the original *tamarensis*. Although these are not conclusive, I am treating them as an undescribed species for now.

Caladenia Gracilis var Sylvicola?

Kevin Bonham

Every year or so I search for the ultra-rare "forest fingers", *Caladenia sylvicola*, a white and green orchid that grows or used to grow on a hill near the Hobart waterworks. This orchid was discovered in 1992 when Hans and Annie Wapstra found the first ever specimen; I discovered a colony of a dozen or so in 1994. The colony was obliterated in one of the two fires that went through the area in the mid-late 1990s and I have never seen the orchid there again. Reported sightings, some with photos, have emerged from time to

time since, but rarely, and generally of single specimens. Some of these have come from well away from Hobart. There has sometimes been speculation about whether *sylvicola* is really a species or an albino-like form of *Caladenia fuscata* or *carnea*.

On the way to the Federation weekend, Greg, Beth, Abbey and I stopped at the Tom Gibson nature reserve at Epping Forest. This area has a reputation for orchids and was carpeted with *Glossodia major*, *Caladenia gracilis* and *Caladenia fuscata* (and possibly other "pink

fingers" group suspects). But we weren't finding anything rare or special until I noticed a strange pale *Caladenia* bud growing on a pale plant by itself.

When I coaxed the nearly open flower to open and saw that the specimen was almost pure white inside I became rather excited thinking that I had again found *sylvicola* after 15+ years of failure to find it again. After some time puzzling over this specimen, Beth found another that was more or less open. What was interesting was that it was growing in a clump of *Caladenia gracilis*. After a while I finally twigged that not only was the flower very *gracilis*-like in form but also the arrangement of the calli was consistent with *gracilis* and not with *sylvicola/fuscata/carnea* (etc).

So what we had here was basically a white colour form of *gracilis* (none too different to the white *Glossodia* we had also seen that day).

The real *sylvicola* is supposed to have significant floral differences, as well as colour differences, from the local

members of the "pink fingers" group. It would be nice if we could actually find more of it to test this! Meanwhile, orchid-watchers should be alert to the possibility of *sylvicola*-like colour forms of various *Caladenias* showing up.



White *Caladenia gracilis*. Photo: Abbey Throssell

Christmas BBQ at The Waterworks Dec 2013

Robyn Gates

Twenty Field Naturalists met at the Waterworks on the final outing and BBQ for 2013.

The weather was fresh and sunny and members enjoyed their lunch while pardalote, thrush and cuckoo serenaded overhead. On the reservoir pacific gulls and ducks enjoyed the sunshine. With easy road access we were delighted to be joined by Julia and she accompanied us along the road to the start of the track.



Field Nats group at the Waterworks. Photo: Beth Heap

We set out on a walk following the Gentle Annie Falls track. The incline was less than gentle but we were rewarded with many colourful slime mould fungi and a flying duck orchid. Jack jumper nests lined the path and daisy bush were in full flower. We passed the dry Gentle Annie Falls and surrounding rocky escarpment. A colourful hairy anthelid caterpillar was found. It was fun to watch Geoff photographing fungi with his cleverly modified tripod very low to the ground and to listen to Genevieve and David talk about the fungi.



Fistulinella mollis. Photo: Geoff Carle



Amauroderma rude. Photo: Geoff Carle

Deep in the valley the creek was running fresh from rain. We crossed it twice on the little bridges. Ferns, moss,

lichen and liverworts were luscious, creating their own special fairy land.

Walking back on the far side of the reservoir we could see pacific gulls gathering in a large group out on the water, ducking and bobbing, bathing in the afternoon sun. A family of wood duck paddled on the waters edge, with six little ducklings darting about. Black ducks and coots and one hoary-headed grebe were also out on the water.



Wood duck with young. Photo: Els Wakefield



Scarlet robin (male). Photo: Els Wakefield



Little Black Cormorant. Photo: Els Wakefield

The last of the group to return finished up with a cuppa, with masked lapwing calling and the spotted pardalote reaching his gentile, clear high notes.

The following fungi species were observed (list supplied by Genevieve Gates)

Agaricus 'ochre scales'
Agaricus 'small, scaly, yellowy'
Amanita 'whitish'
Amauroderma rude
Austropaxillus muelleri
Clitocybe semiocculta
Coltricia australica
Coprinellus disseminatus
Discinella terrestris
Entoloma rodwayi
Fistulinella mollis
Ganoderma australe
Gymnopilus ferruginosus
Hypholoma fasciculare
Hypocrea aff. *megalosulphurea*
Laccaria sp.
Lactarius eucalypti
Lichenomphalia chromacea
Russula persanguinea
Trametes versicolor

The following birds were observed (list supplied by Els Wakefield)

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Australasian Coot | Hoary-headed Grebe |
| Spotted Pardalote | Striated Pardalote |
| Masked Lapwing | Kelp Gull |
| Great Cormorant | Little Black Cormorant |
| Wood Duck | Superb Blue Wren |
| Grey Fantail | Hardhead Duck |
| Green Rosella | Grey Currawong |
| Black Currawong | Shining Bronze-cuckoo |
| Grey Goshawk | Fan-tailed Cuckoo |
| Brown Thornbill | Scarlet Robin |
| Satin Flycatcher | Pacific Gull |
| Raven | Black Cockatoo |
| Pacific Black Duck | Black-headed Honeyeater |
| Feral Duck | Feral Goose |
| Eastern Spinebill | Common Bronzewing |
| Grey Shrike-thrush | Golden Whistler |
| Olive Whistler | |

Annual General Meeting

Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc. – GPO Box 68, Hobart, Tas. 7001

Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers

The 2014 AGM will be on Thursday 6th March in the Life Sciences Lecture Theatre at the University of Tasmania. The President's talk will be at 7:30pm, followed by the AGM, then a General Meeting.

Nominations are called for the following office bearers:-

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| President | Bulletin Editor |
| Vice President | Walks and Talks Coordinator |
| Secretary | Librarian |
| Treasurer | Naturalist Editor |
| | Three (3) Committee Members |

Nominations should reach the Secretary at the above address by Monday 20 February, or be delivered in person immediately prior to the start of the AGM. A nomination form is attached below, but any written nominations will be accepted provided they contain the same information as contained in the official nomination form.

Nominations can also be emailed to secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au and the agreement of the nominee will be confirmed prior to the AGM.

Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Nomination for _____ (position) | Nominated by: _____ |
| Name: _____ | Seconded by ¹ : _____ |
| | Accepted ² : _____ |

1. If this is left blank the Secretary will seek a seconder from the club membership.
2. Signature of the person being nominated. If this is left blank, the person will be asked at the AGM if they accept nomination.