

Bulletin

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Editor: Deirdre Brown Email: tfn.bulletin.editor@gmail.com



Field Nats at The Steppes Excursion, November 5th.
Photograph: Amanda Thompson

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Program 2018	
Thursday 1st. February First meeting for 2018.	Guest Speaker: Simon Grove will present “ <i>Sinking to new Depths in Pursuit of Rare Tasmanian Molluscs</i> ”.
Sunday 4th February-Excursion	A beach excursion is planned, venue TBA.
Thursday 1st March Annual General Meeting	President’s Address from Kevin Bonham: “ <i>Highlights from Historic Field Nats Bulletins.</i> ” Elections of office bearers.
Saturday 3rd. March - Excursion	A forest excursion is planned, possibly to Tooms Lake.
Thursday 5th April - Meeting	Guest Speaker Els Wakefield: “ <i>The Natural Wonders and People of Zambia, Botswana and Namibia.</i> ”
Sunday 8th. April - Excursion	Venue TBA

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.

The Steppes State Reserve Excursion

Sunday 5th November 2017

The Club members who decided to spend the weekend up on the Central Plateau and do a little field naturalising along the Poatina Road on Saturday en route for the excursion the next day, were not disappointed when they saw a number of echidnas and of particular note they found a Gondwanaland species - Velvet worm or Peripatus. Further finds from that day are listed at the end of this report.



Velvet worm.
Photograph: James Wood

Velvet worms are the sole members of the ancient phylum Onychophora – the only animal phylum without a marine species. Fossils of Onychophora have been found dating back to the Cambrian period, 500 million years ago. Tasmania is the world centre of diversity for this phylum with at least 20 species belonging to the Peripatopsid family. The densest populations of velvet worms seem to be the open eucalypt forests in the eastern and southern portions of the Central Plateau. Velvet worms breathe through trachea over the body that are permanently open, thus as water is easily lost, they are restricted to moist places such as leaf litter, under stones and rotting logs. Velvet worms have unique locomotion method by walking on paired legs in a flowing movement by alteration of fluid pressure within them.

Feeding: Velvet worms are nocturnal predators with two small appendages which squirt a white sticky fluid for up to 30cm thus ensnaring its prey – mostly small insects. The velvet worm then bites a hole into its prey injects enzymes which breakdown the internal tissues and it then feeds by sucking in the pre-

digested innards.

Reproduction: The Tasmanian species have interesting sex lives. The male has a pit on his head adorned with hooks and spikes, it attaches a sperm packet into this pit scooped from its genital opening. When mating he attaches himself head first into the female's genital opening!

For more information see: Parks & Wildlife Service – Velvet worms <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspX?base=12460>

The two days before the excursion were cold with snow and ice, but on the Sunday of the excursion the sun shone and sixteen of us assembled at the Steppes Homestead where members Anne Thwaites and Ken Wright welcomed us.

We were pleased that four of our junior members were part of the group, complete with butterfly nets, to keep them entertained. As it warmed up there were plenty of grasshoppers (Acrididae), some Hobart Brown butterflies, the moth *Dirce solaris* for them to try and net!

The habitat of the Steppes State Reserve on the central plateau is primarily subalpine dry sclerophyll, the dominant Eucalypt seen during the Sunday excursion appeared to be *Eucalyptus pauciflora* ssp. *pauciflora*.

During the walk there was plenty of evidence of wombats and of grazing by red-necked wallabies and the feral fallow deer. A herd of over 50 Fallow deer was sighted on the drive from Miena to the Steppes Homestead.



Cardamine tryssa
Photograph Geoff Carle

James Wood - Seed Bank Manager of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, was our excursion leader and he had given us a talk at previous Thursday meeting when he had given some aims for the excursion, to see if we could extend the range for *Cardamine tryssa* (family Brassicaceae) (Thompson 2003) which had only been seen for the first time in the Steppes State Reserve the previous summer, and also, to see if we could find *Leucopogon fraseri* (family Ericaceae) in enough quantity for seed collection by the Seed Bank later in the summer.



Leucopogon fraseri
Photograph: Geoff Carle

James set off into the bush, as the crow flies, following his GPS reading for *Cardamine tryssa* with many of us all trailing and flailing behind, but after consultation we regrouped and following Anne and Ken's previously marked trail we all arrived safely up at the rock outcrops on the Steppes State Reserve, where we enjoyed our lunch.



Steppes lunch time rock
Photograph: Geoff Carle

On the walk up, several new sightings were made of the *Cardamine tryssa* and whilst we were eating our lunch James spotted another plant growing in a crevice on a large dolerite boulder. *Leucopogon fraseri* was found by Fiona Walsh near to our lunch spot and the orchid *Chiloglottis triceratops* which was not on the Steppes State Reserve plant list was also found in the same area.

During the walk James showed us how to differentiate between *Bellis perennis* and *Brachyscome decipiens*; how to identify the native dandelion *Taraxacum aristum*; the tiny *Pimelea pygmaea*; the pea *Almaleea subumbellata* and the fern Adder's tongue *Ophioglossum lusitanicum* ssp. *coriaceum*. We all learnt that the dominant understory plant Pinkberry is now called *Leptecophylla parviflora* and not *L. juniperina* which is only found in New Zealand. (Ref. Jarman et al. 2017)

On arriving back at the Steppes Homestead garden, James named their unknown suckering shrub/tree as *Maytenus boaria* an introduction from South America and somewhat surprisingly belonging to the Celastraceae, the same family as *Stackhousia monogyna*. Perhaps it was introduced by the pioneer Wilson family for its timber and the leaves which could be used to supplement the feed for their cow.



Maytenus boaria
Photograph: Geoff Carle

We were also delighted to find Anne Thwaites and Ken Wright had erected interesting displays about the Steppes Homestead's history and the fauna and flora of the reserve for us and that we were able to explore inside the house. We especially thank them for their time and for a most welcome afternoon tea. Our thanks also go to James Wood for his time and expertise, we all learnt to identify a number of new plants.

Some of us were able to stay for another day and we explored the basalt column quarry off Lake Augusta Road. Two plants of what was thought to be *Cardamine tryssa* were noted there, thus

potentially further extending its distribution range. James Wood will investigate them further on another trip there in the summer. Amanda Thomson also recorded a number of invertebrates at this site (listed below).

The Steppes State Reserve plant list is available from the Natural Values Atlas (NVA) .

Plants

In addition, we found the following plants which are not on the NVA list:

Orchidaceae: *Chiloglottis triceratops* - Three-horned Bird Orchid

Droseraceae: *Drosera pygmaea* - Dwarf Sundew

Fabaceae: *Bossiaea riparia* - Leafless Pea

Portulacaceae: *Montia australasica* - White Purslane

Ranunculaceae: *Ranunculus pimpinellifolius*

Snails (Kevin Bonham)

Paralaoma hobarti

Gratilaoma sp “Knocklofty”

Planilaoma luckmanii

Prolesophanta nelsonensis

The last three listed were new records for the Steppes. As Kevin says ‘Not one of my more successful snail weekends – I saw only six native species across the three days!’

Other invertebrates (Amanda Thomson)

A: From Poatina Road Saturday 4th Nov. 2017

Acari – Red velvet mite with large white spot end of dorsal region, and white spot either side of ‘middle’ (end of podosoma)

Araneomorphae – Spiders

Thomisidae, *Australomisidia* sp. - Flower spider

Nicodamidae, *Nicodamus peregrinus* - Red and black spider

Unknown Salticidae - Jumping spider

Bugs and Beetles

possibly Cydnidae - Burrowing Bug - small, iridescent

Blattidae, *Platyzosteria* sp. - Large, black cockroach

Melynide, *Dicranolius bellulus* - Red and Blue Pollen beetle - small, with notched antennae

Tenebrionidae, *Adelium licinoides* - Darkling beetle

Tenebrionidae, Other Darkling Beetles

Diptera - Flies

Calliphoridae (*Paracalliphora*) *Calliphora hilli* – Blow fly

Limoniidae - Short-Palped-Crane-Fly - unknown species

Tachinidae, *Trigonospila* sp.

Lepidoptera - Moths

? Crambidae, Snout moths - Unknown species

A number of tiny caterpillars seen on lichen – unknown species

Psychidae - Case moth

Clania species

Multipedes

Cormocephalus sp. – Centipede, turquoise green, with orange head

Unknown Millipede - cream with brown (side) stripes. Very elegant, delicate

Opilionidae – Harvestmen

Orthoptera – Grasshoppers

Tasmaniacriss tasmaniensis – Tasmanian Grasshopper

Monistria concinna- Southern Pyrgomorph

Formicidae – Ants

Genus *Amblyopone* - ‘primitive’ ant - a specialist feeder on certain arthropods

Variou

Onychopora (*Peripatopsid*) - Velvet worm.

Scorpion



Neosparassus patellatus - Huntsman
Photograph: Geoff Carle

B: From Steppes State Reserve Sunday 5th November 2017

Amphibians

Littoria ewingii - Brown Tree frog

Bugs and Beetles

Chrysomelidae - *Paropsisterna agricola* - Leaf beetle

Heteroptera - *Dictyotus* sp. - Stink, Shield bug

Lepidoptera

Argynnia hobartia - Hobart Brown

Lepidoptera moth - Geometridae, *Dirce solaris*

Spiders

Neosparassus patellatus - Badge huntsman (late stage juvenile)

Lycosidae - tiny Wolf-spider

C: Basalt Column Quarry, Lake Augusta Road

Monday 6th November 2017

Spiders - Araneomorphaes

Lycosidae - Wolf spiders x 2 (one possibly new)

Artoriopsis expolita

Artoriopsis melissae (ID thanks to John Douglas)

Others

Bombyliidae, *Aleucosia* sp. - Bee-fly

Scarabaeidae, *Onthophagus* sp. - Dung beetle

Acridoidea, unknown Short-horned Grasshopper, with striped antennae

Lepidoptera moth - Geometridae, *Dirce solaris*

Lepidoptera butterfly - *Argynnia hobartia* - Hobart Brown

Annabel Carle

References:

Thompson, I.R. (2003) *A New Species of Cardamine (Brassicaceae) from South-eastern Australia and a Key to Cardamine in Australia*. *Muelleria* 18, 27-32.

Jarman, SJ & Kantvilas, G (2017) *Leptecophylla in Tasmania: a reassessment of four species*.

Swainsona 31:1-16

Christmas BBQ at the Tasmanian Bush Garden

Saturday 9th. December 2017

Fifteen members met on a fine warm morning at the Bushland Garden near Buckland for the annual Field Nats Christmas BBQ. The Bushland Garden, located on the Tasman Highway about 50 km. from Hobart, was built and is maintained by volunteers and features native flora of south-east Tasmania.

As well as being an excellent display of native plants, the garden has picnic and bbq facilities, and so was a most suitable venue for a field nats gathering. As we entered the garden, members were immediately struck by the number of insects feeding on the flowering shrubs, and so progress to the bbq shelter further up the hill was slow!



Field Nats pursue a photographic interest
Photograph: Margaret Warren

After lunch, and the sharing of many delicious Christmas treats brought by members, we dispersed to pursue our individual interests at the site.

As the clouds cleared and the afternoon warmed up, the activity and numbers of nectar-feeding insects increased, providing ample engagement for the macro-photography enthusiasts. The other objects of interest, and of photographic opportunities, are the metal sculptures situated around the gardens, and other wildlife of the flesh and blood kind - frogs were calling in the pond, many skinks and a solitary blue-tongue lizard were seen basking in the sun.



Male Satin Flycatcher
Photograph: Mick Brown

Some of us walked further afield along the tracks to the hidden pool on Nelson Creek, or along the Wallaby, Wombat and Hilltop tracks through dry sclerophyll to the lookout point.

The Tasmanian Bushland Garden is an excellent venue for a naturalists' gathering and is worth the visit in any season to take a break from travel and

to see the native vegetation of the drier parts of Tasmania.

Deirdre Brown



An iridescent moth
Photograph: Mick Brown

Note on Snails (Kevin Bonham)

I didn't find any native snails on the Buckland trip at all this time (didn't look much!) so I'll have to report on the beetles instead! Buckland Gardens turned on a great display of them with at least 20 species seen, mostly visiting various flowers. The jewel beetles were represented by *Castiarina ocelligera* (one specimen) and the larger blackish *C. australasiae* (two seen). I've not attempted to ID all the rest to species but they included two tenebrionid species (*Ecnolagria rufescens* and *Lepispilus sulcicollis*), one clerid species, three cerambycids (longicorns) including one wasp-mimic, at least one mordellid (pinwheel beetle), two cantharids (soldier beetles), two chrysomelids, two oedemerids, one lycid, one scarab, one coccinellid (ladybird), two weevils (one of them *Aoplocnemis*) and a probable dermestid.

Birds (Mick Brown)

Australian Hobby
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Black-headed Honeyeater
Brown Thornbill
Dusky Robin
Dusky Woodswallow
Eastern Spinebill
Fantail Cuckoo
Forest Raven
Golden Whistler

Green Rosella
Grey Currawong
Grey Fantail
Grey Shrikethrush
Laughing Kookaburra
New Holland Honeyeater
Satin Flycatcher
Scarlet Robin
Silvereye
Striated Pardalote
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Superb Fairywren
Welcome Swallow
Yellow-throated Honeyeater

Jewel Beetle Hunt, Liawenee

January 20th. 2018

The first Mienna Jewel beetle hunt this year came on one of those very rare days when it is hotter in Liawenee than Hobart. According to the two-year cycle theory of the MJB, this year should be an "off" year, but we have heard Karen Richards and Chris Spencer had success finding some already. Anyway on our arrival at Liawenee the *Ozothamnus* seemed unpromising, and we persisted for a while but saw mostly scarabs and soldier beetles with only one sighting of a possible (but unconfirmed) MJB.

After some discussion we headed towards Tods Corner and had lunch in the forest just north of it beside a large rock scree at Grandpas Creek. Here Abbey found a few scopariine moths and a white-lip snake, Genevieve filmed an echidna and we observed some very fat snow skinks.

Several of us also spent time finding water bottles large and small and filling them to feed the thirsts of an errant car radiator. I also tried to "find" a rapidly escaping jewel-beetle suspect nearby by throwing my hat at it (a photo of this deed exists) to no avail.

The *Ozothamnus* at our Tods Corner site looked impressive and smelled promising too but again, no jewel beetles at all. I did create some unwarranted excitement when I spotted a suspect flying around on the wrong side of a water-filled ditch; when eventually cornered it proved to be that accursed bugbear of all jewel beetle hunts, the green scarab (*Diphucephala*).

Some of us also had a stop at the Steppes on

the way back, which also failed to yield its target caterpillar, but was good for a number of tiny golden-black coloured jumping spiders found in beating shrubs for caterpillars.

Thanks to the eight of us who attended - negative records are still data, the only problem is you don't know what kind of data.

Kevin Bonham

Library Report

New to the TFNC website

We are pleased to report that the project to get our historical hardcopy Circulars/Bulletins (1907; 1953-1954 & 1956-1999) onto our website is now complete and they may be found at:

<http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/archives/bulletins20thcentury/>

In addition, the TFNC Committee has agreed that the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) should digitise the Tasmanian Naturalist editions 1907-2016 inc. see note and include them as part of the BHL Australian Collections. This means that in future the authors and subject matter in these publications will be found with an internet search. BHL plan to commence scanning our publications in early 2018. For more information on the BHL library see:

<http://biodivlib.wikispaces.com/About>

Note: For copyright reasons and to encourage sales of the current years hardcopy Tasmanian Naturalist, TFNC does not publish on its website the current year's Tasmanian Naturalist. We have therefore determined there will always be a similar one-year time lag in publishing the Naturalist as part of the BHL.

New to the Library

The TFNC Library book catalogue has been updated to include our recent acquisitions. It can be found on our website at <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/library/>

If you wish to borrow any of our books please email librarian@tasfieldnats.org.au or see me in the foyer prior to a monthly meeting to arrange collection.

Reminder to return outstanding books

There are a number of books that have been out on loan for more than two months! Please return them at the 1st February 2018 meeting, this will save me having to chase you up!

Book Accessions since Oct. 2017.

Keeping it Clean - A Tasmanian field hygiene manual to prevent the spread of freshwater pests and pathogens.

(Donated by NRM South)

by Kaylene Allan & Simon Gartenstein (2010)

The manual provides information on how to prevent the spread of freshwater pests and pathogens in Tasmanian waterways, wetlands, swamps and boggy areas. It is intended primarily for people who work in these areas, but also will help recreational visitors to understand the risks and act accordingly.

This publication is also available online at:

<http://dipwe.tas.gov.au/invasive-species/weeds/weed-hygiene/keeping-it-clean-a-tasmanian-field-hygiene-manual>

Joseph Banks' Florilegium – Botanical Treasures from Cook's First Voyage

by Mel Gooding, David Mabberley, & Joe Studholme (2017).

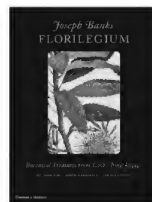
This is the first full colour publication of some of the most extraordinary botanical prints of the 18th century, it is a great scientific record for Banks and Daniel Solander who collected plants at every opportunity and a work of Botanical illustration of outstanding beauty. Includes descriptions by Gooding of the Voyage; and Mabberley of Sydney Parkinson's artwork, his death and the subsequent completion of his paintings and of the engravings. Final chapter Studholme describes the modern printing process.

Marine Plants of Tasmania

By Fiona J. Scott

A colourful introduction to Tasmania's often unique marine flora. Flora has been selected from estuaries, rocky reef habitats and kelp forests.

Annabel Carle, TFNC Librarian



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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

Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers

The 2018 AGM will be held on Thursday 1st March in the Life Sciences Lecture Theatre at the University of Tasmania. The President's talk will be at 7.30 pm, followed by the AGM then a General Meeting.

Nominations are called for the following office bearers:

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

Nominations should reach the secretary at the above address by Monday 19th February, or be delivered in person to the secretary 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 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)

Name _____ Nominated by _____

Seconded by * _____ Accepted ** _____

* If this is left blank the secretary will seek a seconder from the club membership

** If this is left blank the person being nominated will be asked at the AGM if they accept nomination