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May, 1976

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The Statements and the opinions contained in the papers published in this Journal are the responsibility of the respective authors.

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1.

UNUSUAL NEST SITE OF SILVER GULL

By Geoff Gayner

On September 8, 1971, a Silver Gulls' nest was found built on the top of an old pylon in the Yarra River at Fishermens Bend, Port Melbourne. The pylon is part of an old pier near the ferry landing stage, and people crossing the river had an excellent view of the nesting progress of the gulls.

The nest structure was placed in a hollow where the top of the timber pile had rotted out, and the nesting material used was mainly dry grass stems; the nest was about one metre above low water, and six metres from the river bank.

When first noticed, the nest contained three young chicks, apparently newly hatched.

A check on September 13 showed that there was only two young in the nest; they appeared to be developing quite well despite harassment by other gulls - their parents were kept very busy warding off the attacks.

Eight days later (September 21) the nest contained only one bird - what happened to the other chick is unknown; the survivor was nearly feathered by this time, with the primaries and secondaries well developed.

September 27 - sad day for all! The birds including the young had disappeared; the weather over the weekend had been very rough with gale-force winds and a very high tide.

About a week later, I noticed another nest being built (by the same pair of birds?) on another pile about three along from the original nest site; this nest lasted only one week and was then abandoned.

In the Fishermens Bend area, the Silver Gulls have been dominant nesters for some years - until the construction of the West Gate Bridge interfered with them.

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Geelong
Naturalist

Mytilus edulis



UNUSUAL NEST SITE OF SILVER GULL (continued)

The Port Melbourne area consisted mainly of swampland until garbage was dumped there to help fill in the swamps; some gravel has been extracted leaving more gaping holes - some of which have been filled in. The vegetation consisted of saltbush, boxthorn, pigface, thistle, grasses and various weeds.

The area was an ideal nesting habitat for the gulls which must have numbered somewhere over 500 pairs.

Footnote : This nesting record was the first I have noted in this type of site; according to Serventy, Serventy and Warham in their book *The Handbook of Australian Seabirds* - "(breeding) can take place on islands, in estuaries and salt lakes, sometimes in freshwater lakes inland. An 'island' can also be a jetty or other structure, or even a moored boat provided it is surrounded by water."

RARE VISITOR - ELEPHANT SEAL

By Trevor Pescott

Reportedly the first time in nearly one hundred years, an Elephant Seal (*Mirounga leonina*) hauled in onto the bank of the Maribyrnong River in Melbourne for several weeks in March and April.

Then, on April 15, 1975, an Elephant Seal was reported to have come ashore on Eastern Beach where it rested for a short while - it was presumably the same animal.

A young male, it had come ashore to moult, and this complete, it went back out to sea.

As far as I can ascertain, this is the first record of the Elephant Seal for the Geelong District.

SOME NOTES ON THE FUNGUS UNDERWOODIA

BEATONII

By Gordon Beaton

The genus *Underwoodia* consists of three species known at present, one in each of three continents: the type species, *U. columnaris* Peck in North America; *U. fuegiana* (Speg.) Gamundi in Argentina and *U. beatonii* Rifai in Australia. The Australian species was first found in South Australia by Lindley Williams in the late nineteen-fifties. It was fruiting under *Melaleuca pubescens* and was first identified, probably by the Waite Institute, as *U. columnaris*. Lindley Williams sent specimens to Cliff Beauglehole who gave some to me in 1962. My examination of these specimens did not seem to reveal any great difference from *U. columnaris* and that name was generally accepted. A search for the species in Victoria was made and on 18th July, 1964, in company with Rex Filson, I found the fungus fruiting plentifully under *Melaleuca pubescens* beside the cliff walk in the Anglesea camping ground.

Specimens of the Anglesea collection were sent to Kew where they came under examination by Mein Rifai during the course of his work on the Australasian Pezizales. Due to the presence on nematode-like cells in the flesh he considered it to be distinct from the American species and named it as above. This seemed to be rather unfair to Lindley Williams who was the original discoverer of the species, a fact known to Rifai. In any case, as the differences are slight, it remains to be seen if the species will stand the test of time or will ultimately be merged with *U. fuegiana* which it most closely resembles.

Since the initial find in Victoria *U. beatonii* has been found in several localities, always under *Melaleuca pubescens*, which would seem to indicate some degree of commensalism with that species. I have no information as to whether a similar state exists with either of the American species. *Underwoodia* fruits mainly during July-September and is probably a not uncommon fungus but being very inconspicuous it is not often recorded.

BOONAH IN THE RAIN — OTWAYS CAMPOUT 22- 23 NOVEMBER, 1975

Despite a fine day on Saturday, heavy rain overnight and into Sunday brought an abrupt end to our weekend camp. Because of the uncertain conditions of the road out, camp was broken by 9.00a.m., and the following lists are consequently abbreviated.

The campout, based on Seaview Road at the head of the Gentle Annie Track at Boonah, promised to be an outstanding success, judging by the large number of members who attended.

The same venue may be selected for another campout in the next year, because the area has a good range of habitats and excellent conditions for observations along both roads.

The following lists were compiled mainly on Saturday, November 22.

BIRD LIST - PREPARED BY ROGER THOMAS

Crimson Rosella	Olive Whistler
Boobook Owl	Brown Thornbill
White Cockatoo	Striated Thornbill
Brown Goshawk	White-browed Scrub-wren
Kookaburra	Blue Wren
Golden Bronze-cuckoo	Rufous Bristlebird
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	White-throated Tree-creeper
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Eastern Striated Pardalote
Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo	Spotted Pardalote
Blue-winged Parrot	Silvereye
Tree Martin	White-naped Honeyeater
Flame Robin	Eastern Spinebill
Grey Fantail	Crescent Honeyeater
Satin Flycatcher	Red Wattlebird
Scarlet Robin	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Yellow Robin	Goldfinch
Golden Whistler	Forest Raven
Rufous Whistler	Grey Currawong
Grey Thrush	Pied Currawong
Brown-headed Honeyeater	

39 species.

BOONAH IN THE RAIN (continued)PLANT LIST - COMPILED BY E.G. ERREYCYATHEACEAE

<i>Cyathea australis</i>	Rough Tree-fern
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DICKSONIACEAE

<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i>	Soft Tree-fern
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DENNSTAEDTIACEAE

<i>Culcita dubia</i>	Common Ground-fern
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	Common Bracken
<i>Histiopteris incisa</i>	Bat's-wing Fern

LINDSAYACEAE

<i>Lindsaya linearis</i>	Screw Fern
--------------------------	------------

ADIANTACEAE

<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>	Common Maidenhair
<i>Pteris tremula</i>	Tender Brake
<i>Pellaea falcata</i>	Sickle Fern

ASPENIACEAE

<i>Asplenium flabellifolium</i>	Necklace Fern
" <i>bulbiferum</i>	Mother Spleenwort

ASPIDIACEAE

<i>Polystichum proliferum</i>	Mother Shield-fern
-------------------------------	--------------------

BLECHNACEAE

<i>Blechnum patersonii</i>	Strap Water-fern
" <i>nudum</i>	Fishbone Water-fern

GRAMINEAE

<i>Tetrarrhena distichophylla</i>	Hairy Rice-grass
" <i>juncea</i>	Forest Wire-grass

CYPERACEAE

<i>Cyperus tenellus</i>	Tiny Flat-sedge
<i>Gahnia clarkei</i>	Tall Saw-sedge
<i>Lepidosperma elatius</i>	Tall Sword-sedge
<i>Carex appressa</i>	Tall Sedge

CENTROLEPIDACEAE

<i>Centrolepis strigosa</i>	Hairy Centrolepis
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BOONAH IN THE RAIN (continued)

JUNCACEAE

Luzula campestris
Juncus pallidus

Field Woodrush
Pale Rush

LILIACEAE

Xanthorrhoea australis
Lomandra multiflora
" *longifolia*
Laxmannia sessiliflora
Drymophila cyanocarpa
Dianella tasmanica
Anguillaria dioica
Burchardia umbellata

Austral Grass-tree
Many-flower Mat-rush
Spiny-headed Mat-rush
Dwarf Wire-lily
Torquoise Berry
Tasman Flax-lily
Early Nancy
Milkmaids

ORCHIDACEAE

Calochilus robertsonii
Chiloglottis gunnii
Caladenia carnea
Pterostylis longifolia
Gastrodia sesamoides

Purplish Beard-orchid
Common Bird-orchid
Pink Fingers
Tall Greenhood
Cinnamon Bells (Potato Orchid)

PROTEACEAE

Persoonia juniperina
Domatia ilicifolia
Banksia marginata

Prickly Geebung
Holly Lomatia
Silver Banksia

SANTALACEAE

Exocarpos cupressiformis

Cherry Ballart

LORANTHACEAE

Amyema pendulum

Drooping Mistletoe

CARYOPHYLLACEAE

Stellaria pungens
" *flaccida*

Prickly Starwort
Forest Starwort

RANUNCULACEAE

Clematis aristata
Ranunculus plebeius

Australian Clematis
Forest Buttercup

MONIMIACEAE

Hedycarya angustifolia

Austral Mulberry

LAURACEAE

Cassytha glabella
" *melantha*

Tangled Dodder-laurel
Coarse " "

BOONAH IN THE RAIN (continued)DROSERACEAE*Drosera auriculata*

Tall Sundew

PITTIOSPORACEAE*Bursaria spinosa*

Sweet Bursaria

Billardiera scandens

Common Appleberry

ROSACEAE*Acaena anserinifolia*

Bidgee-widgee

MIMOSACEAE*Acacia verticillata*

Prickly Moses

" *verniciflua*

Varnish Wattle

" *mucronata*

Narrow-leaf Wattle

PAPILIONACEAE*Pultenaea daphnoides*

Large-leaf Bush-pea

" *juniperina*

Prickly " "

Dillwynia glaberrima

Smooth Parrot-pea

Platylobium obtusangulum

Common Flat-pea

Goodia lotifolia

Golden-tip

GERANIACEAE*Pelargonium australe*

Austral Stork's-bill

Geranium solanderi

" Crane's-bill

OXALIDACEAE*Oxalis corniculata*

Yellow Wood-sorrel

POLYGALACEAE*Comesperma ericinum*

Heath Milkwort

EUPHORBIACEAE*Poranthera microphylla*

Small Poranthera

Ampera xiphoclada

Broom Spurge

STACKHOUSIACEAE*Stackhousia monogyna*

Creamy Stackhousia

" *viminea*

Slender "

RHAMNACEAE*Pomaderris aspera*

Hazel Pomaderris

Spyridium parvifolium

Aust. Dusty Miller

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BOONAH IN THE RAIN (continued)

DILLENIACEAE

HYPERICACEAE

Hypericum gramineum

Small St. John's Wort

VIOLACEAE

Viola hederacea

" *sieberana*

Ivy-leaf Violet

Tiny Violet

THYMELAEACEAE

Pimelea axiflora

" *ligustrina*

Bootlace Bush

Tall Rice-flower

MYRTACEAE

Eucalyptus obliqua

" *st. johnii*

" *radiata*

" *cypellocarpa*

Leptospermum juniperinum

Melaleuca squarrosa

Messmate

Vic. Blue Gum

Narrowleaf Peppermint

Mountain Grey Gum

Prickly Tea-tree

Scented Paper-bark

HALORAGACEAE

Haloragis tetragyna

Common Raspwort

EPACRIDACEAE

Epacris impressa

Astroloma humifusum

Monotoca scoparia

Acrotriche serrulata

Common Heath

Cranberry Heath

Prickly Broom-heath

Honey-pot Heath

LOGANIACEAE

Mitrasacme pilosa

Hairy Mitrewort

CONVOLVULACEAE

Dichondra repens

Kidney weed

LABIATAE

Prunella vulgaris

Mentha laxiflora

Self-heal

Forest Mint

RUBIACEAE

Coprosma hirtella

Asperula conferta

Rough Coprosma

Common Woodruff

BOONAH IN THE RAIN (continued)CAPRIFOLIACEAE

Sambucus gaudichaudiana White Elderberry

CAMPANULACEAE

Wahlenbergia gracilentia Annual Bluebell

LOBELIACEAE

Pratia pedunculata Matted Pratia

GOODENIACEAE

Goodenia ovata Hop Goodenia
" *lanata* Trailing Goodenia

STYLIDIACEAE

Stylidium graminifolium Grass Triggerplant

COMPOSITAE

Lagenophora stipitata Blue Bottle-daisy
Olearia argophylla Musk Daisy-bush
" *myrsinoides* Silky " "
" *lirata* Snowy " "
" *phlogopappa* Dusty " "
Cassinia aculeata Dogwood
Helichrysum scorpioides Curling Everlasting
Cotula reptans Creeping Cotula
Senecio velleioides Forest Groundsel
" *lautus* Variable " "
Bedfordia salicina Blanket-leaf

109.

SOME INTRODUCED PLANTS LISTEDGRAMINEAE

* *Briza minor* Lesser Quaking-grass
* *Aira caryophyllea* Silvery Hair-grass

IRIDACEAE

* *Sisyrinchium iridifolium* Blue Pigroot (Striped Rush-leaf)

AN HOUR COUNT - No. 17. RHYLL, PHILLIP ISLAND, VIC. By Roy Wheeler

The big news on January 30, 1976 was that the Victorian Government had bought historic Churchill Island off Phillip Island. The purchase was part of a Government program to buy back land vital to conservation.

It was on Churchill Island that Lieutenant James Grant in March 1801 made a garden and built a log cabin. In the garden he planted wheat, onions, potatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins, and melons; apples, plums, peaches, and a little rice and coffee were also sown. In December of that year Lieutenant John Murray visited Grant's garden and found it flourishing. There was a fine crop of wheat, it had grown six feet high and was almost ripe. Murray said he had never seen finer wheat or corn in his life, the straw being very near as large as young sugar-cane. Thus Churchill Island is famous for the first cultivated land in Victoria and the first wheat grown in the State.

Fewer places in Australia has a history more fascinating than Phillip Island and Churchill Island is only part of it. Fewer places are as rich in wildlife as Phillip Island and up to one million visitors a year prove this, its great attraction. In mid-1975 I was approached by the Phillip Island Conservation Society in conjunction with the Western Port Bird Observers Club to write up the bird list of the island for publication by the Groups concerned. Mrs. Wheeler and I visited Phillip Island from October 26 to November 4, 1975 and with the help of Mr. Charles Nancarrow of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division of the Victorian Ministry for Conservation and others we were taken over most of the island and visited most of its famous wildlife areas. We visited Rhyll Sanctuary where Ibis, Spoonbills and Cormorants were breeding, Cape Woolamai where the largest mutton-bird rookery on the Australian mainland is established, the famous Koala reserves - the Oswin Roberts and Ventnor, the Seal Rocks with its hundreds of seals were viewed from Cape Grant, the Penguin Parade areas at Summerland Beach, the third greatest tourist attraction in Australia, Swan Lake and many other places of interest. In all

AN HOUR COUNT (continued)

104 species were listed during our visit. With the help of many people the Phillip Island list stands at 228 species, second only in island lists to Stradbroke Island in Moreton Bay, Queensland which has recorded 256 species. The White Mangroves at "The Nits" near Rhyll and the Ibis rookeries are the most southern in Australia. All these areas I am sure will be preserved for posterity by a band of very dedicated Fisheries and Wildlife Division and a Government intent on preserving this fascinating island. One October day Mrs. Wheeler and I had lunch at a table on the Rhyll foreshore and within sight of Churchill Island. The cairn nearby records some of Victoria's earliest historical events. Built of stones gathered nearby these words are engraved on Cape Woolamai granite.

"To Commemorate the discovery of this port by
Surgeon George Bass, Jan 4, 1798

and the visits paid by

Lieut James Grant, March 1801

Lieut John Murray, Dec 1801

French expedition under Capt Baudin, April 1802

and Capt D'Urville Nov 1826;

also the establishment of a temporary

British Settlement (Fort Dumaresq) Dec 1826."

Whilst having lunch at this very pleasant spot we did an hour count, every bird heard and seen within binocular range. Details are as follows:

Rhyll, Phillip Island, Vic. October 28, 1975. Foreshore overlooking Rhyll Inlet at low tide. Fine and warm with northerly breeze. 12.50 - 1.50p.m.

Birds in order of sighting. Silver Gull, 100; Pacific Gull, 24; White Ibis, 72; Straw-necked Ibis, 36; House Sparrow, 20; Starling, 60; Welcome Swallow, 30; Greenfinch, 10; Goldfinch, 25; Eastern Silvereye, 10; Blackbird, 4; Magpie Lark, 4; Black Swan, 4; Little Pied Cormorant, 8; Pelican, 4; White-plumed Honeyeater, 6; White Egret, 1; Crested Tern, 6; Eastern Curlew, 20; Spurwinged Plover, 6; White-backed Magpie, 6; Little Raven, 4; Black Cormorant, 5; Spotted Turtle-dove, 4; Grey Thrush, 1; White-faced Heron, 4; Skylark, 6; Bar-tailed Godwit, 14; Pied Cormorant, 1; Pied Oystercatcher, 1; Royal Spoonbill, 1; Whimbrel, 1; Red-necked Stint, 2.

Total 33 species and 511 individuals.

WHIPSTICK FOREST - BENDIGO

By D. F. King

A large number of small day-flying moths were observed flying low in areas cleared of trees and scrub and amongst grasses on which they alighted and rested for periods. These moths were identified as Foresters, of the family Zygaenidae. The most notable species was the relatively common metallic blue coloured Pollaninus viridipulverulentus; another species in relatively large numbers was the less spectacular Thyrassia inconcinna.

Two larvae of moths were observed, one the caterpillar of a Geometridae species, characterised by its looping action, Fig.1. A vividly coloured creature, it was black patterned with white wavy lines and straight lines consisting of alternate dashes of white and yellow. The thoracic legs were a deep red and the single pair of ventral prolegs had a red proximal area. It probably belongs to the sub-family Ennominae. The second larva was of the family Limacodidae, better known as the Cup Moth; these larvae are variously known as "Bondi Trams" or "Chinese Junks", and they are of the Doratifera genus which contains eight species, Fig.2. A painful sting can be had from the numerous spines. These larvae will feed on ornamental and fruit trees as well as on Eucalypts.

Also found was a species of ground weevil belonging to the Amycterinae sub-family that contains nearly 500 species of tuberculate or spiny weevils; these are confined to Australia and New Zealand, Fig.3. Nothing is known of their life histories.

A fine specimen of cockroach was obtained, one of the large bush cockroaches identified as Polyzosteria aculata by the National Museum. This species is flightless and has a rough and very rugged integument. For their size they are extremely strong creatures, with the ability to push their way easily under rocks and logs. The overall length was 45mm. They belong to the sub-family Blattinae.

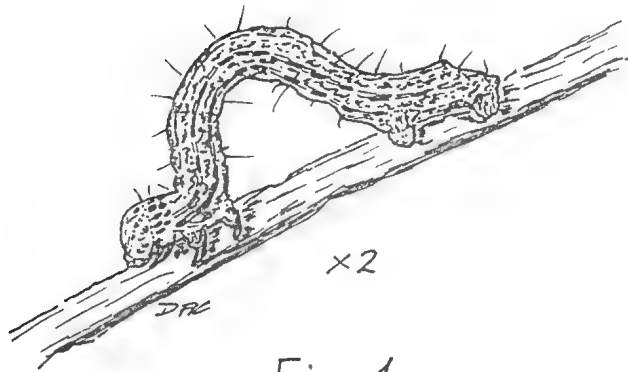


Fig. 1

Larva of a Geometridae sp.

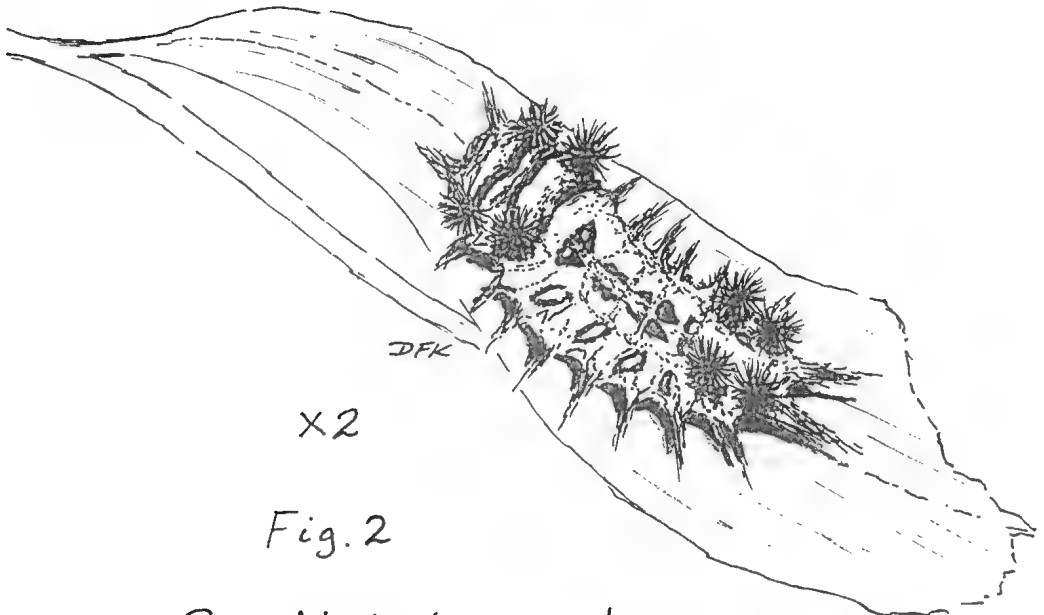


Fig. 2

Cup Moth Larva - Limaconidae sp.

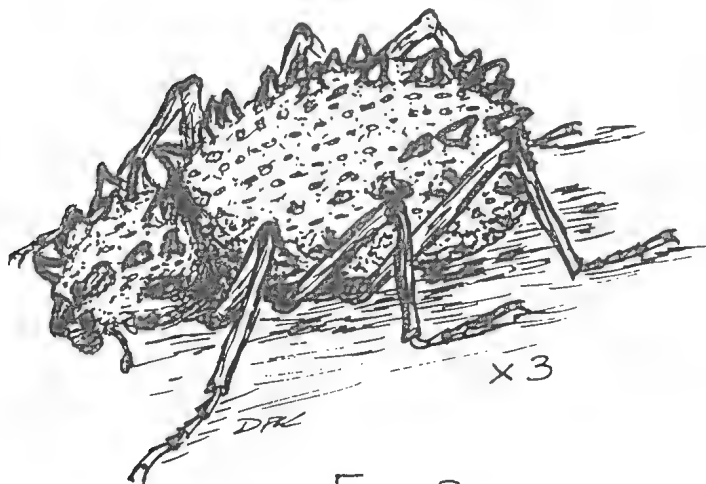


Fig. 3

Ground Weevil - Amycterinae.

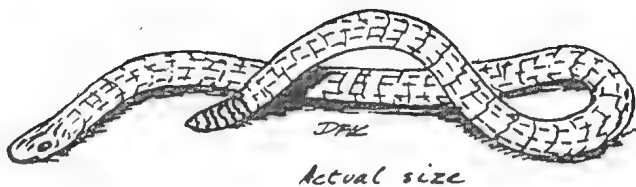


Fig. 4

Worm Snake - Family Typhlopidae

WHIPSTICK FOREST - BENDIGO (continued)

Found under a small rock was a specimen of the frog Pseudophryne semimarmorata. This frog does not rely on a water habitat and does not lay eggs in water, but rather under logs or stones in a damp situation, and therefore is able to survive and breed in the more arid areas such as the Whipstick Forest. The larval (tadpole) development stage is advanced at the time of hatching and therefore does not require standing water to complete its metamorphosis.

An interesting find was the specimen of Worm Snake under a rock; it belongs to the family Typhlopidae, a group of burrowing snakes, Fig.4. This specimen was 156mm long, silvery grey in colour with lines of black dashes along the entire body. A characteristic of this family is that the size of the head is close to that of the circular body - which is of constant diameter for its entire length, except for a bluntly tapered tail, generally similar to the shape of an earth-worm. The body scales are smooth except for about 10mm of the tail section which has a series of coarse scales; these obviously enable the snake to gain purchase on the earth as it pushes with its head when burrowing in search of prey in the form of termites and other soft bodied invertebrates. This specimen, as is normal for this family of snakes, exhibited no threat display when picked up and remained quite docile. Needless to say they do not bite, and they are not venomous.

Another reptile found was a Stone Gecko hiding under a large stone. This specimen belonged to the sub-family Gekkoninae and has the scientific name of Diplodactylus vittatus. A medium-brown lizard, it has a lighter brown zig-zag pattern running from the neck down the centre of the back to the end of the tail. The sides are spotted with light brown and the underside is white. It exhibited a threat display by opening wide its mouth and extending the dark blue tongue. No sound of any kind was made by the lizard during this display.

* * * * *

EXCURSION TO STONY RISES AND LAKE

CORANGAMITE - BIRD LIST

By Trevor Pescott

On April 20, 1975, the G.F.N.C. excursion included a visit into the Stony Rises as far as the Koala Motel, then out Hawks Nest Road to the Lake, and finally back to the south-east side of the Lake.

Forty-four bird species were seen, and the list with brief comments is as follows :

- Dusky Moorhen : several on the small freshwater lake opposite the Koala Motel; it is on this lake that there are two floating islands which are currently under investigation.
- Australian Coot : a small raft of birds noted on the eastern side of Corangamite.
- Little Grebe : a few only were seen. The Hoary-headed Grebe was not recorded on this occasion although it is a common species on the broad salt lakes.
- Pied Cormorant : recorded as "common" on the open water of the large lake.
- Little Pied Cormorant : also very numerous on the Lake. (The flock of Little Black Cormorants often seen on Pirron Yallock Creek was not seen.)
- Australian Pelican : a flock was seen on a rocky island offshore from the East Pomborneit shore.
- Silver Gull : very plentiful around Lake Corangamite.
- Spur-winged Plover : a few pairs were seen in lakeside paddocks.
- Red-capped Dotterel : two pairs were noted on the shell beaches on the eastern shore of the main lake.
- Little Stint : several small flocks of from 3 to 5 birds were noted around the lake shore.

EXCURSION TO STONY RISES AND LAKE CORANGAMITE (continued)

- White Ibis : one small flock only was noted during the day, feeding in the fields adjacent to the lake.
- Yellow-billed Spoonbill : several seen in the shallows of Corangamite.
- White-faced Heron : quite plentiful around the salt lake and in the smaller freshwater lake.
- Black Swan : very large numbers seen on Lake Corangamite; they feed on the water-weed which grows in the lake, and on occasions they move out onto the adjacent grasslands and cause farmers some concern.
- Mountain Duck : only a few seen in the fields adjacent to the lake.
- Black Duck : quite plentiful.
- Grey Teal : a few seen in the vicinity of the main lake.
- Musk Duck : large numbers seen on the broad, strongly saline Lake Corangamite; it is a well favoured habitat for this species.
- Wedge-tailed Eagle : only one was seen, soaring over the forested Stony Rises.
- Whistling Eagle : a few seen during the day.
- Brown Hawk : several seen over the open areas around the lake.
- White Cockatoo : one small flock seen in the timbered country over the Rises.
- Eastern Rosella : commonly seen during the day.
- Kookaburra : a few seen and noted by their inimitable call in the timbered area of the Rises.
- Welcome Swallow : quite plentiful throughout the area.
- Scarlet Robin : only one pair seen, at the lunching area near the Koala Motel.
- Flame Robin : several birds moving in a north-east direction on the eastern side of Lake Corangamite.
- Rose Robin : one seen in the bush-land behind the Motel.

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EXCURSION TO STONY RISES AND LAKE CORANGAMITE (continued)

- Golden Whistler : two birds noted during the day.
- Grey Thrush : this superb songster is quite plentiful in the bush-land areas.
- Mudlark : numerous generally.
- Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike : a few birds seen in the timbered country over the Stony Rises.
- Striated Thornbill : common, frequenting the outer foliage of the Manna Gums and other trees in the Rises country.
- Golden-headed Fantailed Warbler : a few birds were seen and noted by their distinctive calls.
- Blue Wren : plentiful in the undergrowth of the Rises.
- White-throated Tree-creeper : a few birds noted.
- Yellow-faced Honeyeater : a few seen in the Manna Gums.
- Noisy Miner : quite numerous in the Rises. (The White-plumed Honeyeater was not recorded, perhaps by oversight.)
- Skylark : plentiful in the grasslands areas.
- Red-browed Finch : several small flocks noted.
- Goldfinch : plentiful, particularly where the thistles were seeding.
- Little Raven : identified by their calls - this species is extremely plentiful in the Western District.
- Grey Butcherbird : heard calling at one of our stopping points at Pomborneit East.
- White-backed Magpie : plentiful.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT**By Edmund G. Errey**

While reviewing a year successfully completed, a president naturally wishes to express his gratitude to those who have done so much to help bring the Club through another progressive term.

Foremost are the members of our committee, whose well-attended meetings are characterised by keen discussion of wide-ranging agenda. But these monthly meetings are only part of the committee's work, and many extra hours are spent, particularly by the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Editor.

Mr. Gordon McCarthy has been secretary for almost ten years. Mr. Trevor Pescott has an even longer span to his credit as magazine editor since he produced his first issue in January '65. Added to this is the expanded news sheet in which he details the club's activities so fully each month. To these two stalwarts the club owes a great deal. Our sincere appreciation goes to them both. Mrs. Valda Dedman has zealously guarded our finances for two years and her aptitude in money matters is a valuable asset to the club.

Another stalwart is Mr. Jack Wheeler, whose perennial activities seem to cover every aspect of the club's work, and whose enthusiasm has involved us so much in the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve that it seems to be almost an adjunct of the G.F.N.C.

Mr. Ian Woodland's programming of topics and activities for junior members has been of outstanding benefit to these young folk and to the club as a whole. The magnificent display of projects presented by the juniors at our December meeting last year was sufficient proof of this. In addition, Ian has been one of our valued projectionists for a number of years.

Miss Frances Poole is another committee member who has given years of service to the club. Unfortunately for us, Francie is retiring, at least for the time being, after working on the committee for ten years, and her work both as botanist, specialising in orchids, and in numerous organisational activities has been most valuable. Francie has had outstanding success with her slides in

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)

Photoflora, winning the Paul Fisch Trophy for the third time. This year she had eight of her slides accepted.

The other committee members also have contributed much to the effective and smooth working of the club and I want to add my appreciation of all they have done.

Many members not on committee have been working quietly and assiduously on our behalf, both at our monthly meetings and betweentimes. Mr. Wheeler has had tremendous assistance at Ocean Grove Nature Reserve from a team of enthusiasts in planting, labelling, mowing, clearing tracks, watering, and supervising visitors, both school children and adults.

As a Field Naturalists Club is a scientific body, appropriate work is being done along these lines. Publicity has been given to the Botany Group and their work in identifying and listing plants in various bush areas of the district. There is still much to be done in this regard, both in research and in the writing up of reports for present and future reference.

But botany is only one subject, and not the first study to be undertaken by this club. Bird identification and listing began by present and past members long before the club was established, and continues on every excursion and campout. Cliff Tingate, Eric Bound, Ron Lavery, Geoff Gayner, Gordon McCarthy, Trevor Pescott and Jack Wheeler are our authorities in this field and we have seen their excellent photographic records. The club is fortunate that Gordon's son Glen, and his mate Geoff Taylor, are two enthusiastic young bird watchers already well versed in ornithology long before the seniors retire from such work. Mammal surveys have also been carried out for a number of years, particularly in the Otways.

Perhaps more could be done in regard to geology, for there we have authorities also, in Stan Rowe and John Agar. A number of other members are known to be keenly interested. Insect studies, too, have their following, and the efforts of Arthur Chapman in filming the life history of the Wanderer Butterfly and other insects provide an excellent example of the work that is being done by our members. Other possible avenues for group activity are pond life, sea-shore life, reptiles and astronomy. Like other topics these can easily be subdivided for intensive study.

My sincere thanks to all who have done so much for the Club this year. May your interest and enjoyment long continue.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Valda Dedman

Once again I have pleasure in reporting a successful year financially. Total bank credit stands at \$1214.06, made up as follows:

General Account	\$763.79	(\$ 649.84	1974/5)
Excursion Account	\$100.27	(\$ 375.93	")
Deposit Stock	\$350.00		
TOTAL	<u>\$1214.06</u>	(\$1025.77	")

This represents an increase of \$188.27, a most satisfactory result in view of the particularly high expenses we have encountered during the past twelve months, as it reflects members' support in special money-raising efforts.

We had to meet increases in affiliation fees to other organizations, in postage and in the rent of McPhillimy Hall for our monthly meetings, and in addition we had to meet a backlog of printing costs. Publication of the magazine was in arrears, and the valiant effort of the Editor which brought the published issues almost up to date also resulted in a doubling of our expenditure in this direction.

During the year we also doubled the size of the monthly news sheet, so as to give our members a more comprehensive coverage of Club activities and the work of the Committee. This naturally added to the cost of the news sheet, but we feel the extra expense is justified in view of the added information we have been able to give to members.

Were it not for the Fete held at the end of February 1976, the General Account would have shown a debit balance at the end of the financial year. Our thanks go to all those who gave so generously of time and goods to make the Fete such a financial success.

A final boost to our funds came from Photoflora, the profit from which we shared with the Victorian Plant Preservation Society. That most successful slide exhibition added \$71.35 to our credit balance.

We increased our income from the sale of publications, helped by the generous donation by Mrs. Daisy Wood of royalties of sales we made of her book, "In Harmony With Nature".

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TREASURER'S REPORT (continued)

At first glance it would appear that the Excursion Account operated at a loss over the twelve months. In fact, we transferred \$350.00 from this account to Deposit Stock, to enable us to take advantage of a higher rate of interest and help offset the effects of inflation. Owing to the success of the Fete we did not have to call on this reserve, although we came near to doing so.

We also opened a third account into which we paid all donations towards the pamphlet on Injured Birds and Animals, shortly to be published by Mr. J. Wheeler. At present this fund stands at \$905. This amount has not been included in our ordinary Club total, as we regard it as money held by us on trust for a specific purpose.

Financial membership stands at 464, made up as follows:

Single adult	163
Joint adult (55)	110
Family (41)	164
Junior/Student	27
	<u>464</u>

Subscribers to "Naturalist" 62

Of these, 42 were supporting memberships, and 34 have the excursion sheet posted monthly. Total membership has dropped by 50. We regret that we must cross unfinancial members off our lists, but postage and printing costs make it impossible to "carry" members after twelve months.

Once again we found it necessary to send reminder notices to 117 members. At the present high rate of postage this was an unfortunate expense, and should have been unnecessary, as reminders had been included in the "Geelong Naturalist" and the news sheet. Subscriptions are due on 1st. April each year. \$271.00 was collected after notices were sent out in December.

We continue to gain new members, however. We welcome these newcomers to our Club, and hope their association with us will be both enjoyable and informative.

I would like to thank all members for their continued support, and my assistants for all their work. Mrs. B. Quirk has cheerfully and competently handled the sale of publications at our monthly meetings, and Miss F. Poole has efficiently managed all the bus bookings and collected all excursion monies. And, finally, I must thank the Hon. Auditor, Miss Jean Hoggart, for her work in examining and checking the financial records.

BALANCE SHEETGENERAL ACCOUNT

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Subscriptions	1383.80	Printing-Glg. Naturalist	1122.60
Sale Publications	422.00	-Other	388.40
Donations	40.25	Postage	122.40
Interest	21.39	Petty Cash	50.00
Fete	541.40	Affiliation Fees	162.40
Injured Bird Fund	40.00	Rent	159.00
Photoflora	243.70	Publications	295.00
Various	11.84	Injured Bird Fund	15.00
		Photoflora	148.05
		Insurance	52.10
		F.N.C.V. Medallion Trust	10.00
		Stakes - Belmont Common	7.00
		Sundries	58.48
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	2704.38		2704.38
	<hr/>		<hr/>

Bank Reconciliation Statement to 18/3/76

Bank Balance as at 14/3/75	652.84
Less unrepresented cheque no. 353	<u>3.00</u>
	649.84
Receipts for 12 months to 18/3/76	<u>2704.38</u>
	3354.22
Expenditure " " " "	<u>2590.43</u>
	763.79
Unrepresented cheques nos. 977,978,988.	<u>151.03</u>
	914.82
Un-entered credit 18/3/76	<u>214.20</u>
Bank Statement	<u>700.62</u>

Balance Income over Expenditure 1975/1976=\$113.95

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1976

BALANCE SHEET 1975/76 (continued)

EXCURSION ACCOUNT

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Bus - Lal Lal	124.00	Bus - Lal Lal	106.35
- Newstead	125.00	- Newstead	141.50
Deposits - Mt. Macedon	52.00	Transfer to Deposit Stock	350.00
Interest	12.29		
Interest from Deposit Stock	8.90		
	<u>322.19</u>		<u>597.85</u>

Bank Reconciliation Statement to 18/3/76

Bank Balance as at 14/3/75	375.93
Receipts for 12 months ended 18/3/76	<u>322.19</u>
	698.12
Expenditure " " " "	<u>597.85</u>
Bank Statement	<u>100.27</u>
Deficit for year = \$275.66	

DEPOSIT STOCK \$350.00
(transferred from Excursion Account)

ACCOUNT NO. 3

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	
Donations to Brochure "Care of Sick and Injured Birds and Animals" 907.00	Stamp Duty	2.00
Bank Statement 18/3/76	\$905.00	

Treasurer : Valda W. Dedman

Auditor : Miss J. Hoggart

JUNIOR PAGES

One of the first articles in this issue of "Geelong Naturalist" is by Mr. Gayner in which he describes an unusual nesting place of a Silver Gull - the common seagull of our beaches.

In the photograph on the page opposite is another unusual nest, this time built by a pigeon.

Mr. W. Smith, one of our Club members, works in a laboratory on the second floor of the Block Building in Little Malop Street opposite McEwans.

When he arrived at work one Monday morning last spring, he found to his surprise this nest and egg on his work bench; at first he thought his work mate may have played a joke on him.

But suddenly a pigeon arrived on the window sill, and he realised what had happened - a window had been left open since Friday, and the pair of pigeons had decided that here was a great place to nest.

So they collected the only nesting material they could find in the city streets, and arranged it into the form of a nest; only one egg was laid before Mr. Smith arrived back at work.

Since the bench was needed, the nest had to be removed, but not before some photographs were taken.

Can you guess what was in the nest? Try to count from the photograph then compare your answer with the list supplied by Mr. Smith of the nesting material used.

The pigeons we have in most of our cities are domestic birds which have escaped or have been abandoned by their owners; they now live completely in the wild, and we refer to them as Feral Pigeons. Domestic pigeons were bred originally from Rock Doves - and we are now using this name much more for Feral Pigeons; but they are all the same thing.

And the nest? It contained 30 ring pulls from drink cans, 30 pieces of wire, 14 rubber bands, 10 nails (up to 4 inch size), 5 ladies hair clips and 18 other odds and ends including drink straws, string, broken shoe laces, paper clips - and two small twigs!

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A LAST WORD**By Trevor Pescott**

The March State elections have passed perhaps more quietly and uneventfully than is good for Victoria and its people; Mr. Hamer has an obvious mandate to pursue policies developed since the retirement of Sir Henry Bolte - and few would deny that conservation has had an enormous boost since then.

The two Ministers with whom we have most dealings have also retained their portfolios, and we look forward to good things in the next triennium. Many pieces of legislation developed since 1970 have been excellent - the Land Conservation, Environment Protection and new Wildlife Acts each encompass great ideals.

Others - the Land Drainage Bill for example - leave much to be desired, and it is in the analysis and treatment of such Bills that we must lean heavily on the expertise developed in the A.C.F., C.C.V. and V.N.P.A. in particular.

Recently, however, we have become aware of some serious problems which must erupt soon, and it is then that we may see tested the real strength in conservation of the Minister of Lands (Mr. Borthwick) and Forests (Mr. Granter) and the Premier.

The timber industry seems determined to undermine the credibility of the L.C.C., a fact evident by the propoganda unleashed over the East Gippsland proposed recommendations, and comments made about the Alps and the Grampians - two areas yet to be considered by the L.C.C.

The A.C.F. and the C.C.V., two bodies considered by most as leaders in the conservation field are suffering assaults from the timber industry and the F.C.V. over the wood chip issue; and the V.N.P.A. is under heavy fire over its Alpine Park proposal.

It seems inevitable that there will be a headlong clash soon over the use of forest land in Victoria, with the eastern half of the state as the "battleground"; but if we in Geelong feel isolated and secure - we are not. That steady stream of logs travelling through Geelongs is our Otways forest going to pulp - can we afford to let it continue?

TREVOR PESCOTT, Hon. Editor.

COMING EVENTS

- May 4 General Meeting. Mr. Stan Rowe - South Africa.
 16 Excursion. Turtons Track (Otways).
 Leader: Mr. T. Pescott.
 25 Committee Meeting - Mr. G. Gayner.
- June 1 General Meeting. Mr. Frank McCarthy - Filming
 at Lake Borrie.
 12-14 Otways Campout.
 Leaders: T. Pescott, G. Gayner.
 20 Excursion. Pt. Henry/Connewarre.
 Leaders: J. Wheeler, G. McCarthy.
 26 Working Bee - You Yangs.)
 27 Tree Planting - You Yangs.) Leaders: J. Wheeler,
 29 Committee Meeting - Mrs. V. Dedman. T. Pescott.
- July 6 General Meeting. Astronomy for Beginners.
 18 Excursion. Moggs Creek.
 Leaders: Mrs. B. Quirk, Miss F. Poole.
 24 Tree Planting - Belmont Common.
 27 Committee Meeting - Mr. D. King.
- August 3 General Meeting. Members Night.
 7-8 Brisbane Ranges Campout.
 Leaders: E. Errey, B. Quirk.
 15 Excursion. Anglesea.
 21-22 W.V.F.N.C.A. Rocklands Campout.
 29 Pine Clearing at Anglesea.
 31 Committee Meeting.

* * * *

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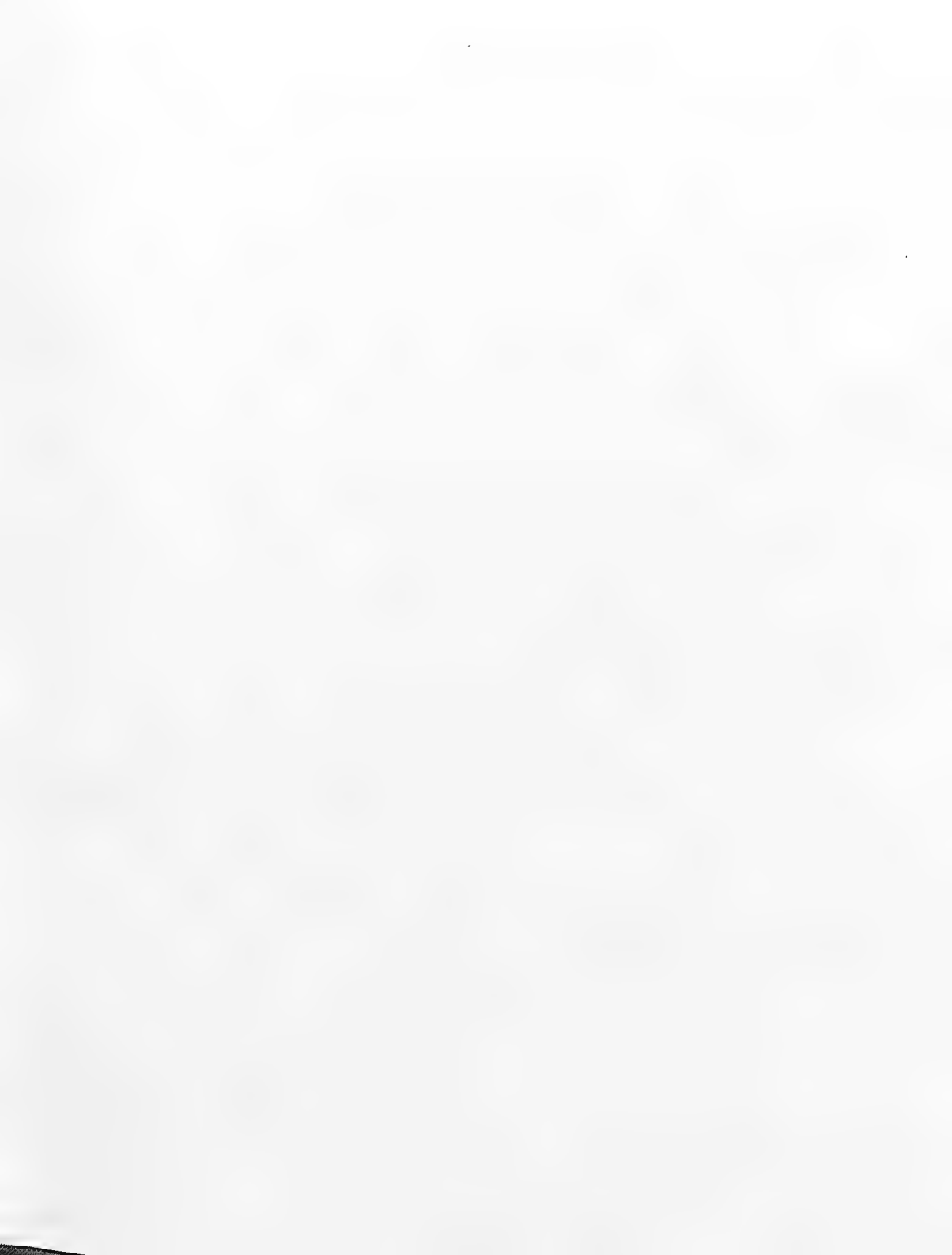
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G E E L O N G
N A T U R A L I S T

Journal of the
Geelong Field Naturalists
Club



Vol. 13, No. 2.
AUGUST, 1976

Hon. Editor,
Trevor Pescott,
4 Victoria Terrace,
Belmont, 3216.

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The Statements and the opinions contained in the papers published in this Journal are the responsibility of the respective authors.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the G.F.N.C. is open to any person interested in Natural History. The 'Geelong Naturalist' is distributed free to all members, and the Club's reference and lending library is available.

Subscription Rates are:
(Due on 1st April)

	Per Annum
Supporting Membership	\$6.00
Joint Membership	\$5.00
Adult Membership	\$3.00
Junior Membership	\$1.00
Subscription to Magazine	\$2.00

THE MALLEE RECEIVES FLOOD WATERS

By Jack Wheeler

The 158 members, plus their families, who attended the April outing and weekend campout of the Western Victoria Field Naturalists Clubs Association had a real treat in witnessing flood waters entering Wyperfeld National Park; Lake Brambruk rapidly filling for the first time since the big flood of 1917-1918, had to be seen to be believed.

Furthermore, having first received water on 19th January and with a depth of almost 2 metres by Anzac Day, it had attracted a host of waterbirds in little over three months.

It was not until a population count was made of Lake Brambruk by a complete circuit of the lake which was at least 6-1/2 kilometres, that one realised the importance of such masses of water to waterbirds in the heart of the Mallee.

The known floods of the Wimmera river goes back almost 1-1/2 centuries but they are very infrequent with many years between some floods.

Evidence of these floods goes back to 1830-34 when judging by flood marks on trees, the then great flood went well beyond the area we know as Wyperfeld today; in fact, it went north to a plain known as Wirrengren. Twenty years later in 1851-54 Wirrengren again flooded and forced out a farmer known as Russell.

The next great flood occurred in 1870-74.

The flood which occurred in 1911-12 filled all lakes, but little was received at Wirrengren. This also happened in 1917-18, when Wirrengren again missed out, and that was the last time prior to this present flood that filled Lake Brambruk.

In 1957, there was a minor flood which reached Black Flat in Wyperfeld and the depth was almost 1-1/2 metres.

The history of this present flood makes interesting reading and one cannot help but realise the extent of water which can flow

THE MALLEE RECEIVES FLOOD WATERS (continued)

north to the Mallee. Lake Hindmarsh was dry in 1973, but commenced receiving water from the Wimmera River on August 4th of that year. Lake Hindmarsh, which is approximately 48 kilometres around, took 9-1/2 months to fill and on 23rd May 1974 overflowed into Outlet Creek; 4 days later, water began to flow into empty Lake Albacutya which is situated a few kilometres north-west of Rainbow. This lake is only about half the circumference of Hindmarsh but is much deeper. Albacutya took 17 months to fill, and on 20th October 1975 commenced to overflow and the water continued its northward journey. By 11th November water commenced to flow into Leg of Mutton Lake, and less than 3 weeks later was flowing into Lake Werrebean; on 5th December, Kidney Lake was receiving water, and finally the great day came and water commenced flowing into Wyperfeld on 10th December. One day later the water reached Bullocks Head, four days later was received at Little Black Flat and eventually into Black Flat on 19th December - one could say what a Christmas present to this great National Park.

The water was not content to just fill Black Flat, but continued on its merry way, flowing into Jacki-Jackibal Swamp and Lake Brimin, and it was on 9th January that it commenced to flow out of Black Flat on to Lake Brambruk. The latest report I have is that the intake has tapered off and even though nearing capacity, Lake Brambruk is only rising at 1cm a week; water has not yet commenced to flow north into Wonga Lake. It appears that the possibility of water reaching Wirrengren country, as it did in the 1830-34 and later floods, will depend on the flow in the Wimmera River this winter.

Our walk around the circuit of Lake Brambruk commenced at 7.00a.m. when light was sufficient to commence counting birds. Our team of three was Mrs. Shirley Rooke (daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Owen Andrews), Roger Thomas and myself. We had already left camp at 6.00a.m. and walked the 3 kilometres to the lake, over sandhills to the tune of the dawn chorus of mallee birds which was a real delight, particularly with the intriguing calls of the Southern Scrub-robin.

Most of the observing was done by Shirley and Roger, whilst I did the recording. Not only water birds were counted, but species seen within a chain or so of the water's edge were included. There was one island situated off the north shore which would cover an

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THE MALLEE RECEIVES FLOOD WATERS (continued)

area of approximately 2 hectares and it was well timbered. Apart from this, no other trees were out in the water, but right around the lake's edge was well timbered with River Red Gums and Black Box, which were in majority.

Sections of mallee scrub penetrated only into the northern sector. Small inlets off the western shore carried scores of water birds, all feeding so early in the morning. Off the west shore and somewhat scattered, we counted 65 Blue-billed Duck, a species which to our knowledge had only a single bird previously sighted within the Park.

Another interesting feature was the breeding of the Grey Teal and 7 clutches totalling 54 young were noted - remarkable indeed since this lake was completely dry prior to 19th January last. The amount of feeding by the waterbirds all over the lake itself indicated the amount of food the flood waters had brought in.

In rushes on the east shore we substantiated the sighting two days before of a lone Eastern Swamp Hen, a bird not previously listed for the Park. Usually this species allows close approach, but not this bird, for as we approached it flew almost out to the lake's centre amongst teal and coot. Of all my visits to the Mallee over many years, I had never had better observing of large numbers of waterbirds, particularly with over a thousand Little Grebe, Wood Duck 176, Grey Teal 614, Blue-winged Shovellers 58 and Musk Duck 14.

Along the west shore, the sighting of 38 Regent (Smoker) Parrots gave some of the best observing of this species ever, perched in the early morning sun.

Over the last of the circuit, we had to move in a short distance to avoid the deep water at the lake entry, and then wade almost knee-deep to cross Outlet Creek; it still emptying masses of flood waters from the far away Wimmera River, which in fact rises near Beaufort some 250 kilometres to the south-east.

The level of all waters now in Wyperfeld National Park, will depend on this winter's rains over the Wimmera catchment area, and a wet winter could mean much more water flowing north and by so doing create the greatest mass flooding of mallee areas this century.



MALE MUSK DUCK

Photograph by Jack Wheeler



LITTLE GREBE

Photograph by Laurie Millar

August
1976

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THE MALLEE RECEIVES FLOOD WATERS (continued)

Otherwise, if we have a series of drier winters from now on, we could see gradual evaporation and over the next three or four years, the area revert to the flat dry water plain we are so familiar with. But in the meantime those clear glistening waters will continue within the Park for at least another three years, perhaps longer - I certainly hope so.

Wyperfeld National Park - Bird Population Count Lake Brambruk :
7.00a.m. to 11.15a.m. 26-4-76. Distance approx. 6-1/2km -
covered by three observers - Jack Wheeler, Roger Thomas and
Shirley Rooke.

Weather fine, overcast, some sunny periods. First water in Lake
Brambruk since 1920, depth approx. 2-1/2 metres and still filling
with good flow from Lake Albacutya.

Common Bronzewing	1	Galah	97
Eastern Swamphen	1	Regent Parrot	38
Coot	306	Ringneck Parrot	75
Great Crested Grebe	1	Red-backed Parrot	22
Little Grebe	1210	Laughing Kookaburra	26
Hoary-headed Grebe	142	Tree Martin	202
Pied Cormorant	5	Grey Fantail	12
Spur-winged Plover	42	Willie Wagtail	39
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	Scissors Grinder	2
White-faced Heron	34	Jacky Winter	5
Wood Duck (Maned Goose)	176	Red-capped Robin	1
Black Swan	83	Golden Whistler	1
Mountain Duck	1	Rufous Whistler	6
Black Duck	122	Grey Shrike-thrush	11
Chestnut Teal	24	Magpie Lark	14
Grey Teal	614	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	4
Breeding - Young		White-fronted Chat	4
7 clutches totalling		Brown Weebill	24
54 young		Chestnut-tailed Thornbill	2
Hardhead	6	Yellow-tailed Thornbill	6
Blue-winged Shoveller	58	Black-backed Wren	4
Blue-billed Duck	65	Dusky Woodswallow	3
Musk Duck	14	Black-capped Sittella	24
Wedge-tailed Eagle	3	Brown Treecreeper	3
White Cockatoo	134	Yellow-tailed Pardalote	4

THE MALLEE RECEIVES FLOOD WATERS (continued)

Striated Pardalote	129	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	13
Brown-headed Honeyeater	2	Starling	1
Striped Hooneyeater	5	Australian Raven	123
White-eared Honeyeater	1	White-winged Chough	2
White-plumed Honeyeater	20	Black-winged Currawong	3
White-rumped Miner	12	Black-backed Magpie	42
Red Wattlebird	8		

Total species - 60.

Total individuals - 4034.

* * * * *

HOUSE SPARROWS AND NECTAR**By Trevor Pescott**

The large Grevillea hookeriana in the front garden of our Belmont home produces a steady flow of nectar throughout spring and summer - much to the delight of our resident honeyeaters.

The Yellow-winged in particular enjoy probing the toothbrush, red flowers with their brush-tipped tongues, and the Red Wattlebirds and White-plumed Honeyeaters vie with them for the sweet liquid booty.

In the 1975 spring, another "honeyeater" joined them - none other than the rascal House Sparrow.

Ill-equipped, it seems, to feed on nectar, the House Sparrows appear to thoroughly enjoy their nectar meal, and strangely enough they seem quite in harmony with the native honeyeaters in their feeding.

* * * * *

WANDERINGS IN THE WHIPSTICK

By Ted Errey

Our campout last October took us further north than we had previously been on these annual excursions. This time we camped in the Whipstick scrub north of Bendigo, and although periods of heavy showers were experienced during our stay, our "wet gear" and the very interesting environment prevented them from spoiling our enjoyment.

The Whipstick is an area of spindly eucalypt bushland, made up of various species, mainly Green, Blue and Bull Mallees. Instead of the typical sandy soils where mallees grow further to the north-west, the terrain in this area consists chiefly of ironstone ridges. The chemistry of this sedimentary formation may cause a stunting of eucalypt growth, but it certainly has not prevented the development of a varied and attractive vegetation.

Covering an area of approximately 72 kilometres the Whipstick lies only 10 kilometres north of Bendigo. Though it is goldbearing country, even the diggers of the early 1850's found the environment rather forbidding. Water was scarce and the scrub very dense, as it is in parts to this day. The lure of gold, however, over-rides such difficulties, and considerable amounts were found, including a nugget of 26.2 kgm. Only a foot under the surface. This was the biggest nugget to come from the Bendigo fields.

Evidence of the feverish activity of the gold-rush days can still be found in mullock heaps, old machinery, and remains of water channels. One particularly fine piece of engineering with primitive equipment was carried out by a group of German miners. They brought water for their sluicing operations for several miles through a system of tunnels and channels, a remarkable achievement with the facilities available well over a century ago.

The name "Whipstick" apparently originated in the bullockies' use of the slender mallee stems as handles for their whips. Following

WANDERINGS IN THE WHIPSTICK (continued)

submissions by the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club in 1971, an area of 8135 ha. was declared a Forest Park, to conserve the natural history and the scientific and recreational values of the area.

A great deal of the enjoyment of the weekend was due to the efforts of Mr. Bob Allen of the Bendigo club. To begin with, he met us in Eaglehawk on Friday afternoon and led us to our camp site in the forest, stopping at places of interest on the way, where he introduced us to such gems as croweas, baeckeas and boronias. Some of these beautiful shrublets have been propagated from cutting material we collected in the district. Two cartons of timber scraps that Bob left with us proved very useful for fire lighting, particularly as Saturday morning brought a succession of rather heavy showers.

But it was through his knowledge of the district, historical and geographical as well as botanical, that Bob added so much value to our few days there. Apart from the relics of the goldmining era, we found many reminders of the early days of settlement when we visited the "Eucy" still. There the story of the distilling of eucalyptus oil from mallee foliage, both in the present day and over past years was clearly detailed. The operators had much to tell and show of the district's history, as well as of the virtues of the purified oil that was obtainable in bottles of various sizes.

We were taken by our guide to fascinating places we would not have found for ourselves. For the botanically minded there was a succession of new plants to be met. Many of these we could recognise, or readily identify, but such tiny plants as the sunrays, styleworts and centrolepis, each only a few centimetres high, would have had to be passed over if we had been unaided.

The sunrays are diminutive members of the family Compositae. Only under the hand lens do they show up as obvious everlasting-type flowers. Similarly, the styleworts can be recognised as relatives of trigger-plants when examined closely. The centrolepis is a hairy midget quite plentiful over most of Victoria outside the Alps, very attractive when bejewelled by early morning moisture.

All too frequently we ignore the smallest of our bushland plants. They all have their attractions, even to the naked eye. A low



At a rocky nest of the Mallee-fowl, a photograph taken during a previous excursion.

Photograph by Trevor Pescott.

WANDERINGS IN THE WHIPSTICK (continued)

power lens often brings gasps of admiration, while a microscope reveals that they are just as beautiful as the larger, more familiar species.

The dozen orchids included Large Duck-orchid and Brown Beards (Purplish Beard-orchid). Goldfields territory is often good orchid territory, as we have seen around Steiglitz, and we would have liked a few more days in the Whipstick to add to the orchid list, as well as to general plant lists and to bird lists as well.

Common and Purple Appleberries of our local forests are replaced in the north by Sweet Appleberry. These twiners are in the same family as Spiny (or Sweet) Bursaria and White Marianth that were also listed. Pittosporums are the best known genus of this family, to which they have given the name Pittosporaceae.

Most of the acacias seen are familiar species in the Geelong district, though a round-leaved form of Gold-dust Wattle was found. Ausfeld's Wattle, apparently confined to the Bendigo-Heathcote area, was pointed out to us. This is closely related to Cinnamon Wattle; in fact there seems to be some uncertainty yet as to the correct classification of this species.

The Whipstick also boasts of a rare Westringia and a rare Phebalium, but these we were not able to locate in the limited time available.

Also rare, and of very great interest, was the site of an old Mallee fowls' nest to which we were taken before we left on Sunday. It is fifty years since Mallee fowl built their unique nest-mounds in the district, though evidence of their work can still be seen. In making these mounds, the birds scratch together litter from many square metres of territory. In the Mallee the sandy soil is collected with the leaves, twigs and grass, but the Whipstick soil is different, and quantities of buckshot gravel and ironstone pebbles are incorporated in the mounds. Since the lowans ceased operations half a century ago, due no doubt to the presence of foxes as well as humans, the plant materials of the mounds have decomposed, leaving only heaps of stones as evidence. Even this evidence was in danger of disappearing when some of the stone was being used for roadmaking or concreting some years ago.

Editor's Note : See also "Geelong Naturalist" Vol.13 No.1 May 1976 for "Whipstick Forest, Bendigo" by D.F. King.

EAGLEHAWK-WHIPSTICK CAMPOUT—PLANT LIST

By G.F.N.C. Botany Group

ADIANTACEAE

Cheilanthes tenuifolia

Rock Fern

GRAMINEAE

**Aira caryophylla*

Silvery Hair-grass

Stipa variabilis

Variable Spear-grass

CYPERACEAE

CENTROLEPIDACEAE

Centrolepis strigosa

Hairy Centrolepis

LILIACEAE

Lomandra multiflora

Many-flowered Mat-rush

Dichopogon strictus

Chocolate Lily

Thysanotus patersonii

Twining Fringe-lily

Dianella revoluta

Black-anther Flax-lily

ORCHIDACEAE

Thelymitra aristata

Scented Sun-orchid

" *antennifera*

Rabbit-ears

Calochilus robertsonii

Purplish Beard-orchid

Diuris brevissima

Short-tailed Leopard Orchid

" *pedunculata*

Golden Moths

Caleana major

Large Duck-orchid

Eriochilus cucullatus

Parson's Bands

Caladenia carnea

Pink Fingers

" " (dwarf)

" "

" *cucullata*

Hooded Caladenia

" *angustata*

Musky "

Glossodia major

Wax-lip Orchid

CASUARINACEAE

Casuarina muellerana

Slaty She-oak

EAGLEHAWK-WHIPSTICK CAMPOUT PLANT LIST (continued)PROTEACEAE

Grevillea rosmarinifolia
" *alpina*
Hakea sericea

Rosmary Grevillea
Mountain "
Silky Hakea

SANTALACEAE

Exocarpos strictus
" *cupressiformis*
Leptomeria aphylla

Pale-fruit Ballart
Cherry Ballart
Leafless Currant-bush

CHENOPODIACEAE

Rhagodia nutans
" *hastata*

Nodding Saltbush
Saloop

RANUNCULACEAE

**Ranunculus parviflorus*

Small-flower Buttercup

LAURACEAE

Cassytha melantha

Coarse Dodder-laurel

DROSERACEAE

Drosera peltata

Pale Sundew

PITTOSPORACEAE

Bursaria spinosa
Marianthus procumbens
Billardiera cymosa

Sweet Bursaria
White Marianth
Sweet Apple-berry

MIMOSACEAE

Acacia diffusa
" *aspera*
" *gunnii*
" *ausfeldi* (*leprosa*)
" *acinacea*
" " (*var. Rotundifolia*)
" *pycnantha*

Spreading Wattle
Rough "
Ploughshare "
Cinnamon "
Gold-dust "
" "
Golden "

PAPILIONACEAE

Daviesia virgata
" *ulicifolia*
" *genistifolia*
Pultenaea pedunculata
Dillwynia sericea

Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea
Bitter-pea (Gorse)
Broom Bitter-pea
Matted Bush-pea
Showy Parrot-pea

EAGLEHAWK-WHIPSTICK CAMPOUT PLANT LIST (continued)

RUTACEAE

Boronia anemonifolia	Sticky Boronia
Eriostemon verrucosus	Fairy Wax-flower
" difformis	Small-leaf Wax-flower
Crowea exalata	Small Crowea
Phebalium obcordatum	Dainty Phebalium
Correa reflexa	Common Correa

EUPHORBIACEAE

Pseudanthus ovalifolius	Oval-leaf Pseudanthus
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DILLENIAEAE

Hibbertia stricta	Erect Guinea-flower
" acicularis	Prickly " "

THYMELAEACEAE

Pimelea humilis	Common Rice-flower
" glauca	Smooth " "

MYRTACEAE

Euc. macrorhyncha	Red Stringybark
" leucoxylon	Yellow Gum
" sideroxylon	Red Ironbark
" viridis	Green Mallee
" polybractea	Blue "
" behriana	Bull "
" polyanthemos	Red Box
Leptospermum myrsinoides	Heath Tea-tree
Melaleuca squarrosa	Scented Paper-bark
" uncinata	Broom Honey-myrtle
Baekea ramosissima	Rosy Baekea
Calytrix tetragona	Fringe-myrtle

LOUDONIA

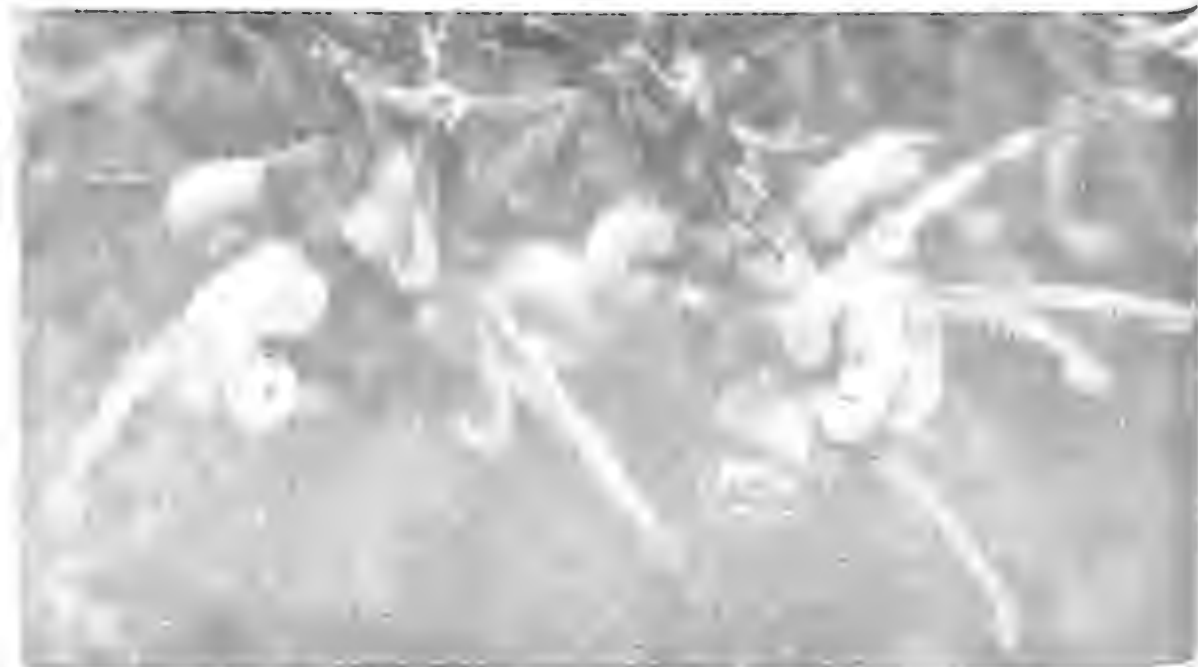
Loudonia behrii	Golden Pennants
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HALORAGACEAE

Haloragis elata	Raspwort
" tetragyna	Common Raspwort

HYDROCOTYLEAE

Hydrocotyle medicaginoides	Pennywort
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Some Bendigo plants -

Top left:

Mountain grevillea

Lower left:

Fruits of Cherry Ballart

Above:

Short-tailed Leopard orchid

Photographs by Trevor Pescott

EAGLEHAWK-WHIPSTICK CAMPOUT PLANT LIST (continued)EPACRIDACEAE

<i>Astroloma humifusum</i>	Cranberry Heath
<i>Lissanthe strigosa</i>	Peach Heath

LABIATAE

<i>Westringia rigida</i>	Stiff Westringia
<i>Prostanthera denticulata</i>	Rough Mint-bush
" <i>saxicola</i>	Slender " "

GOODENIACEAE

<i>Goodenia amplexans</i>	Clasping Goodenia
" <i>ovata</i>	Hop "
<i>Dampiera lanceolata</i>	Grooved Dampiera

STYLIDIACEAE

<i>Levenhookia dubia</i>	Hairy Stylewort
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COMPOSITAE

<i>Brachycome perpusilla</i>	Rayless Daisy
<i>Olearia teretifolia</i>	Cypress Daisy-bush
<i>Stuartina muelleri</i>	Spoon Cudweed
<i>Cassinia arcuata</i>	Drooping Cassinia
<i>Helipterum laeve</i>	Sunray
" <i>demissum</i>	"
<i>Helichrysum bracteatum</i>	Golden Everlasting
" <i>obcordatum</i>	Grey "
<i>Millotia tenuifolia</i>	Soft Millotia
<i>Toxanthes muelleri</i>	Common Bow-flower
<i>Senecia quadridentatus</i>	Cotton Firewood

* * * * *

BIRDS IN THE BANNOCKBURN FOREST

By Ina McIntyre

Anyone who does not know the forest near the schools' plantation at Bannockburn would be surprised at the amount of bird-life there. In summer and autumn it is focused on a permanent dam in the forest, and to take one's tea and sit beside it on a summer evening is to witness a continual procession of birds coming to drink or bathe, often 20 or 30 at a time.

There is no need for a hide; after the first few moments the birds ignore the watchers. We have seen as many as 8 or 10 Rainbow-birds wheeling and flashing above the water, a neat row of Red-browed Finches drinking at the water's edge and groups of White-plumed Honeyeaters splashing into the water and sweeping up to fluff out their feathers in a nearby wattle. Blue Wrens come daintily down to drink, Yellow-faced and Yellow-winged Honeyeaters, and big handsome White-eared Honeyeaters and tiny White-naped Honeyeaters are seen here too; Scissors-grinders and Willie Wagtails, swallows and Tree Martins, all coming to enjoy the water in their various ways. Rarer visitors are Rufous and Golden Whistlers, Spotted and Eastern Striated Pardalotes, and on one occasion a pert little Eastern Shrike-tit came down. Goldfinches are common. "Red lowries" and rosellas are nervous visitors, and come into nearby trees but seldom venture to drink. Red and Little Wattle-birds stay even further from the dam.

Ravens fly overhead without disturbing the company, but if a Whistling Eagle comes into view all the smaller birds take cover, and in a moment the dam is deserted.

Kookaburras are heard, and sometimes seen in the nearby bush, where there are also Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, Grey Thrushes, Jacky Winters, Yellow-tailed Thornbills, Scarlet, Yellow and Flame Robins, Pallid and Fan-tailed Cuckoos, Silvereyes, White-throated Tree-creepers, Dusky Wood-swallows, White-winged Trillers, and once only we saw a Golden Bronze-cuckoo. At times a Bronze-wing Pigeon would rise noisily from our feet, and once we disturbed two quail, but they were gone before we could identify them.

BIRDS IN THE BANNOCKBURN FOREST (continued)

We have found various nests in the forest too - a Brown Falcon's nest high in a tree, crowded by young ones almost ready to fly; Jacky Winters' nests so tiny that it seemed impossible that eggs or baby birds would not fall out, a wren's nest in a low bush; Willie Wagtails' nests, one with 4 baby birds sitting in a row on the branch beside it, one with 4 babies, naked and helpless, which a week later were almost ready to fly; Dusky Wood-swallows' nests behind loose pieces of bark on the trunk of a tree are often only a few feet from the ground; one had baby birds being fed, another the babies huddled together on the ground below the nest, with their beaks together making a point in the centre of the group.

One day we found that soft bark had been stripped from a branch leaning against a tree, and stood back to watch. Two little Spotted Pardalotes came and energetically tugged pieces of bark from the branch, carried them away, then returned to repeat the performance. We failed to find their nest, but in another part of the forest where we had frequently heard, and occasionally seen, an Eastern Striated Pardalote, we eventually found its nest - a hole in a bank of earth, with the typical small piece of stick protruding from the bank near the hole, to provide a resting-place for the bird on its return.

By taking the Inverleigh Road from Geelong, and using one of the little-used cross roads to reach the forest, a wide variety of birds can be seen, according to the time of year and how wet or dry the country happens to be. As well as sparrows, starlings, magpies, Pipits and Mudlarks, we have seen -

Skylark	Galah	Straw-necked Ibis	White Ibis
Spur-winged Plover	Red-backed Parrot	White-faced Heron	
White-necked Heron	Nankeen Kestrel	White-fronted Chat	
Black-shouldered Kite		Swamp Harrier	

Grey Goshawk (with a nest in a big tree near the road.) A Little Pied Cormorant had a regular perch for some weeks on a post beside a dam. Other dams are visited by Black and Mountain Ducks, Grey Teal and an occasional Wood-duck, while the big swamp at Murgheboluc is often thronged by a variety of water-birds, including Black Swans, Pelicans, Black and Little Black Cormorants, Hoary-headed Grebes, Yellow-billed Spoonbills and a variety of ducks. We have also seen Black-fronted Dotterels feeding at the edge of the water there.

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BIRDS IN THE BANNOCKBURN FOREST (continued)

Once as we were driving home from the forest towards evening, a Grey Teal duck was leading her brood across one of the quiet side roads. When we stopped the car there was a great flurry of activity; the male bird, till then unobserved, flew off in a wide circle, the female put on an elaborate broken-wing act, and the ducklings disappeared rapidly into the long grass at the side of the road. It was useless to look for them, and as we drove off the male bird circled back and presumably the family resumed their interrupted journey.

RAINBOW LORIKEETS IN NEWTOWN

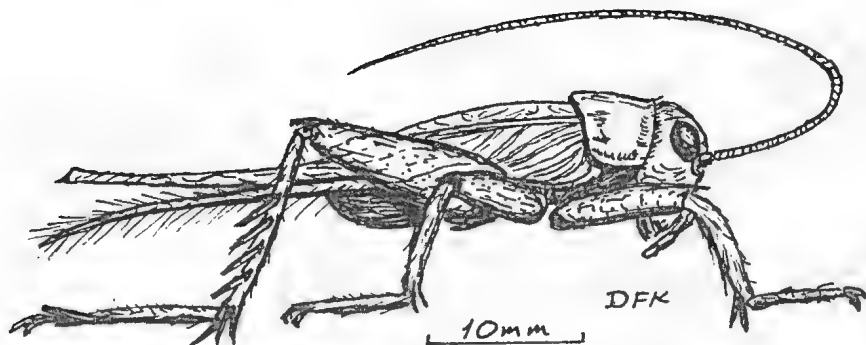
By Theo Trickett

Our original ten Rainbow Lorikeets which came to our garden last April have now dwindled to five only. There were two young at about the end of August. Rainbow Lorikeets have a variety of calls, of course, from their musical contented conversation as they imbibe from the nectar pots, to the harsh discordant ejaculation of disgust - such as when they arrive and find the nectar pots empty. The call of the juveniles, however, was similar to that of a couple of small rusty wheels grinding together. However they quickly learned where to find the nectar. Like other young birds they were slow to take off as one approached, so the brown bills were clearly seen.

It is a pleasure to see five or six of these beautiful creatures at the rim of one of the birdbaths, and amusing to see their bathing technique. Quite unlike the delighted flirtation of the honey-eaters with the water, or the obvious enjoyment of the magpie, the Rainbows waddle through the bath and stumble back on to the rim, complaining loudly, and then one of the others would do likewise; the behaviour of the remainder on the rim is far from exemplary - they sometimes lunge at their neighbour, or inch around the rim, bumping into the next one, who naturally objects, and both flap their wings angrily at each other. Sometimes two would-be bathers end up finishing their argument on the lawn. I am glad to report that bathing operations are usually quite amicable when only one pair turn up together. (The date on these notes is February 29, 1976)

CRICKETS

By Lionel Welsh



Field Cricket - Teleogryllus commodus, ♂

Sketch by D.F. King.

Detested by the rural dweller, abhorred by the shopkeeper, revolted, and even feared, by the housewife, the cricket hordes have come and gone.

In my sister Doll's expanse of garden, a bower of trees, shrubs, creepers, and lawns, of fuschias, camellias, and hydrangeas, the chirp of the cricket is almost unending. To some monotonous, even irritating, but to my ears not unpleasant, a voice of the summer, of sunshine and starlight, they are as friendly as they are harmless.

Stumpy and soft, one or two will invade our living rooms. Tim, our half Persian cat, will turn them over with an exploratory paw, gaze at them with a speculative eye, then let them go free. Perhaps Tim hails them as Brother Cricket, in an Assisian mood of love and goodwill. Well....perhaps! I know I am espousing an unpopular cause. But I offer an original limerick which I have composed in all sincerity.

CRICKET PLAGUE : A sportsman was feeling so wicked,
 Believing no more he could stick it;
 "I swear I will crush
 These vermin to mush!"
 "You could, sir! But would that be cricket?"

AN HOUR COUNT, No. 18

By Roy Wheeler

In March 1976, Mrs. Wheeler and I visited the Mid-Murray area of north-west Victoria, where I gave a talk at Nyah to the members of the Mid-Murray Field Naturalists Trust. We were billeted by various members at Goschen, Wood Wood, Kooloonong and Narrung and enjoyed very much meeting the families concerned. At Narrung our hosts were Mr. and Mrs. Alex Fisher at their lovely home on the banks of a fine lagoon close to the Murray River. I asked Mr. Fisher to let me have the history of the property "Allawah" Narrung via Piangil. He wrote as follows: "The Narrung Pre-emptive Right title was granted by the British Government in the colony of Victoria in 1864 and the area 129,500 ha. and a total title area of 6,500 odd ha. The Fisher family bought 122 ha. of 130ha of the Pre-emptive Right Title in 1938 and this included the lagoon which resembles the old river system and covering probably 40 to 48 ha. of water. It is one of the few such water and timbered areas under private title along the Murray River. From 1938 to 1971 they had excellent water in the lagoon, abundant bird populations, aquatic plants and creatures. He counted 27 different water-birds on the lagoon one afternoon some years ago. In 1971 he first saw evidence of the European Carp presence, water weeds such as the water-ribbons floating on the surface, apparently loosened by chewing of the root areas by the carp. Since then all water plants and much water life has disappeared, the water is continuously muddy and plenty of carp visible along the edges of the water at all times, likewise constant splashing and water disturbance over the general surface. Some water birds now are never seen - coots, grebes, musk duck and many other ducks, lots more are seldom seen and in fewer numbers such as the pelican. The Black Cormorants have increased in numbers and large rookeries occur locally in flood years. All this is most disappointing, both for birdlife, domestic use of the water and general viewing. There is no sign of a remedy as yet, the cormorants may help a little, 5000 Black Cormorant are on the lagoon for several weeks

AN HOUR COUNT No.18 (continued)

This was the first time I had come into direct contact of an area dominated by the European Carp menace. The story behind the illegal introduction of the carp into Victorian waters is briefly this.

In 1960 an advertisement appeared in country newspapers inviting inquiries for fast growing hardy fish for farm dams. By 1961 many European Carp had been sold to farmers stocking their dams. The State Government did not move until December 1961 to prohibit the sale of live carp and in 1962 an inquiry was held. A full scale carp eradication campaign was started in 1962 but in spite of this in the following year European Carp appeared in rivers and water storages in parts of Gippsland and elsewhere. By 1969 the menace had reached the Murray River System. From there they have spread into New South Wales by the Darling and into South Australia by the Murray. Countless lagoons, lakes, irrigation channels, creeks and streams have become the breeding places for the European Carp. As they destroy all vegetation growing in the water by uprooting it with its pig-like feeding action, it is fast becoming a threat to many water-bird breeding areas throughout the Murray and Darling River Systems. Flood waters act as their dispersal agent.

The only solution to the problem seems to be complete drainage and the destruction of all carp in the area concerned. This paid off at Lake Guthridge at Sale some years ago. Recently I visited Lake Guthridge and it was teeming with water-fowl once again.

Mrs. Wheeler, Mr. Fisher and myself seated in chairs on the lawn in front of the house and overlooking the lagoon did an hour count during our visit and it certainly shows the lack of bird life on the lagoon. Details herewith: "Allawah" Narrung, Vic. March 22, 1976. Fine, cool and no wind. 7.50 to 8.50a.m. Overlooking the lagoon. Birds in order of sighting.

White-plumed Honeyeater, 62; Willie Wagtail, 2; Black-backed Magpie, 6; White Egret, 1; Welcome Swallow, 4; Magpie Lark, 4; Whistling Eagle, 2; Black Cormorant, 10; Darter, 3; Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, 7; Laughing Kookaburra, 2; Striated Pardalote, 6; Raven, 4; Red-backed Parrot, 4; White-faced Heron, 9; White-necked Heron, 3; Blackbird, 3; Little Friarbird, 6; Galah, 22; Yellow Rosella, 16; Tree Martin, 4; Little Pied Cormorant, 7; Black-fronted Dotterel, 2; Peaceful Dove, 2; White Cockatoo, 12; White Ibis, 3; Yellow-billed Spoonbill, 2; Grey Thrush, 1; Spurwinged Plover, 2.
Total 29 species and 201 individuals.

ANOTHER CELANEA CHAPTER

By Jim Watson

(Editor's Note : in 'Geelong Naturalist', Vol.10, No.3, November 1973, Mrs. Dedman wrote an extremely interesting story on observations about an Orchard Spider, Celanea excavata; Mr. Watson wrote some additional notes in 'Geelong Naturalist' Vol.11, No.3, November 1974, and the ensuing notes are a follow-up to those two articles.)

The egg-cases, deposited in webbing in a Melaleuca armillaris at a height of some 2.5 metres increased in number until seventeen were visible, the last four or five much smaller than the earlier efforts.

Inspections in late March revealed that many of the earlier cases had holes in them, so evidently their occupants had escaped - by mid-April, some 50% of the cases came under this heading. But "Celanea" still clung unobtrusively to the lowest of the cases, and we often climbed up on the step-ladder with a magnifying glass to inspect the lady.

Until last week we could detect little change, then, about April 14, she moved overnight to a position about 25mm away from the egg-case cluster, and slightly above them.

Her body, which had previously appeared rigid, and unmoving even in a strong wind, now appeared to be moving slightly in the breeze, as though held only by strands of webbing. But I hesitated to touch the creature in case she should be disturbed - under the magnifier she appeared as solid as before. The following day, she had moved even further away from the cases, and on Friday, April 16, had disappeared completely! We suspect that squally winds during the night had carried away her wasted frame, and that actually she was living through her final hours over those pre-Easter days.

There's a sense of loss at her disappearance, and we shall leave the cases in position in the hope that more spiderlings will emerge, possibly to create interest during the summer of 1976-7.

A NEW WADER FOR AUSTRALIA

By Jack Wheeler

On 22nd February, 1976, a group of bird watchers happened to be visiting the Woorinen drainage lake a few miles out of Swan Hill, when two of the group, Robert Swindley and Fred Smith, identified a greyish wader as a Grey Phalarope (Phalaropus fulicarius), a bird species which observers had been on the lookout for many years, as prior to this sighting, it had never been reported in Australia. The late Vic. Lowe and son Tom of Mystic Park happened to be on hand and Tom having his camera gear, was able to take photographs to substantiate the sighting.

This sighting wraps up all three Phalaropes now that can occur in Australia, the other two being the Red-necked Phalarope and Wilson's Phalarope. It is of interest that these last two have been recorded further south than this Swan Hill sighting, the Red-necked being first recorded in December of 1962 at the settling ponds at Werribee Metropolitan Farm with later sightings at Altona, Seaholme, and all in eclipse plumage. It is also interesting to note that this species, like the Grey Phalarope has lobed toes, as occurs in our waterfowl, the Australian Coot. The Wilson's Phalarope was first sighted by Fred Smith on Lake Murdeduke, beyond Winchelsea, on 6th February 1966 with later sightings at Golf Links Swamp at Altona in 1968 and 1969.

The distinguishing features of the Grey Phalarope are simple in that it has a distinct white wing stripe when in flight, lobed toes and for its size rather a stout beak. In size it is approximately Sharp-tailed Sandpiper size (20cm) and is a greyish plumaged bird with white underparts. This bird near Swan Hill appeared extremely tame and on most occasions continued feeding with almost complete disregard to humans. The accompanying photograph was taken by Jack Hayward of the Mid-Murray Field Naturalists, from as close as 3 metres, and a powerful lens was not needed.

Phalaropes generally all breed in the far north and this bird is actually a North American which after breeding moves south to

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A NEW WADER FOR AUSTRALIA (continued)

South America. One may ask, what happened that this bird was so far off course to end up in southern Australia, certainly one of nature's well kept secrets. However, the Grey Phalarope has been recorded on three occasions in New Zealand, and I understand all three are now museum specimens, and all were females.

We trust that this bird does not end up in this way, and thank goodness for a camera which can give an accurate substantiation to the sighting. This bird which was located on 22nd February was last seen on 18th March, and not reported since. Roy Wheeler arrived a day too late in Swan Hill to see the bird, and two days later a special car load from Canberra also missed out.



A new Australian record - the Grey Phalarope

Photograph by Jack Hayward

JUNIOR PAGES

Once again, the Editor has not been able to find an article written by a junior member for these two pages - but perhaps with the many hours of study students must do, it is unfair to expect them to write for the Naturalist.

The Club's Committee is aware of this, the amount of homework undertaken by students - after all, the man responsible for the Junior Meetings, Mr. Woodland, is the principal of one of our district consolidated schools.

A program of meetings has been prepared by Mr. Woodland to cover as many different ideas as possible, and for this reason we have such interesting topics as snails, spiders, birds beaks, wild-flowers, sea birds, sea creatures, ferns, caring for injured birds and photography being discussed.

Perhaps our next "Geelong Naturalist" may have a brief report on the meetings held in the first half of the year.

* * * * *

One of the subjects included on the syllabus card is "Nature Calendar 1977", and this is due for the December meeting.

Each month, each time of the year has its own particular subject to study, whether the season is summer when rock pools seem alive with sea creatures, or autumn when we find fungi and spiders; winter is a good time to study things closer to home (snails or earthworms for example) or to look for seabirds.

Then there is spring, and with the warmer weather we can find wild-flowers in the largest numbers, and birds are nesting.

Which is the next season to come to us?

What are we most likely to find if we go out to the bush during the next few months?

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JUNIOR PAGES (continued)

Our campouts can be really great fun, and one of the more enjoyable times is in the evening when we have finished tea, but before we go out spot-light hunting for animals.

Some of the stories we hear told are quite interesting, and at our last camp in the Otways in June, two stories were quite amusing.

Mr. Tribe had with him a tape recorder for picking up the calls of birds, and that reminded one of our other members of another bird observer who was taping the calls of a flock of White Cockatoos at the You Yangs. When he replayed the tape, he heard amongst the normal calls of the birds a "Pretty Cocky"; apparently a pet cockatoo, which had been taught to talk, had escaped from its cage and had rejoined its friends at the You Yangs.

The other story was about a farmer in the Otways who met a stranger in his bathroom one New Years Day morning.

The man had been out to a New Years Eve party and had come home very late, long after midnight; he slept in the next morning, but when he did get up and go into the bathroom to wash, he was confronted by a very angry, and rather confused Tiger Cat hiding under the bath.

How the Tiger Cat got inside the house he does not know, for to do so it had to come in through the back verandah, past the man's dog which slept there, and into the house.

The question of more interest to the field naturalist is : why did it come indoors?

* * * * *

A LAST WORD

By Trevor Pescott

I have yet to know which definition is the original one, but I suppose each one, no matter how unkind, is true in essence - is it the specialist who learns more and more about less and less until he knows everything about nothing, or the non-specialist learns less and less about more and more until he knows nothing about everything?

There certainly is truth in yet another saying that only the most inexperienced naturalist who claims to know a great deal about his subject, for inevitably each door to knowledge that is opened leads to many more unopened doors awaiting the key of the enquiring mind.

The specialist, indeed, must choose a continually narrowing path in his learning, casting aside most of the intriguing side alleys to follow his chosen road; and the non-specialist, in his exploring, at least superficially, the many distractions along the way, finds himself falling further and further behind the specialists.

Is there a compromise - should we seek it?

If there is one it is in the sharing of learning, in communication, in willingness to teach and learn simultaneously; and I believe the vehicles for this fascinating process are the Naturalist magazines of the many groups involved in the study of natural history.

The object, or at least one aim, of publishing the "Geelong Naturalist" should be to gather and spread knowledge, experience and curiosity about the natural world.

It is the Editor's task to gather, and this can be done only by asking the assistance of all members; there are within the Club, many experts in many fields - their knowledge, so often hidden in simple modesty, can be of immense value to the inexpert.

And the member who claims to have nothing of interest to impart to his fellow members is being quite unfair to us all - it is so often that experience locked away in the memory of the casually observant person which can be of great benefit in the expansion of understanding our local environment.

(continued)

COMING EVENTS

- August 3 General Meeting. Members' Night.
Juniors : Birds' beaks.
7-8 Campout, Brisbane Ranges. Leader: Mr. E. Errey.
15 Excursion, Anglesea area. Leader: Mr. G. Mathison.
21-22 W.V.F.N.C.A. Campout, Rocklands.
29 Pine clearing, Gum Flat.
31 Committee Meeting - Miss L. Ramsay.
- September 7 General Meeting. Arnhem Land. Dr. J. Agar.
Juniors : Wildflowers.
11-12 Campout, Brisbane Ranges. Leaders: Botany Group.
19 Excursion, Inverleigh Common. Leader: Mr. D. King.
28 Committee Meeting - Mr. J. Wheeler.
- October 5 General Meeting. Items to be arranged.
Juniors : Sea Birds.
9-10 Campout, Hepburn. Leaders to be arranged.
16-17 W.V.F.N.C.A. Campout, Bendigo.
24 Excursion, Mt. Wallace area. Leader to be arranged.
26 Committee Meeting - Mr. T. Pescott.
- November 2 General Meeting. Conservation in China. Mr. W. Davis.
Juniors : Sea Creatures.
7 Working Bee, You Yangs. Leader Mr. J. Wheeler.
13 Saturday - Working Bee, Belmont Common.
21 Excursion bus trip, Melbourne Botanical Gardens.
Leader: Mr. R. Baldwin.
27-28 Campout, Otways. Leader: Mr. T. Pescott.
30 Committee Meeting - Mr. E. Errey.
- December 7 General Meeting. Members' Night.
Christmas break-up.
Juniors : Nature Calendar, 1977.

* * * * *

A LAST WORD (continued)

"Geelong Naturalist" is the ideal place to record your observation, to impart your knowledge however meagre you may consider it.

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Honorary Editor.

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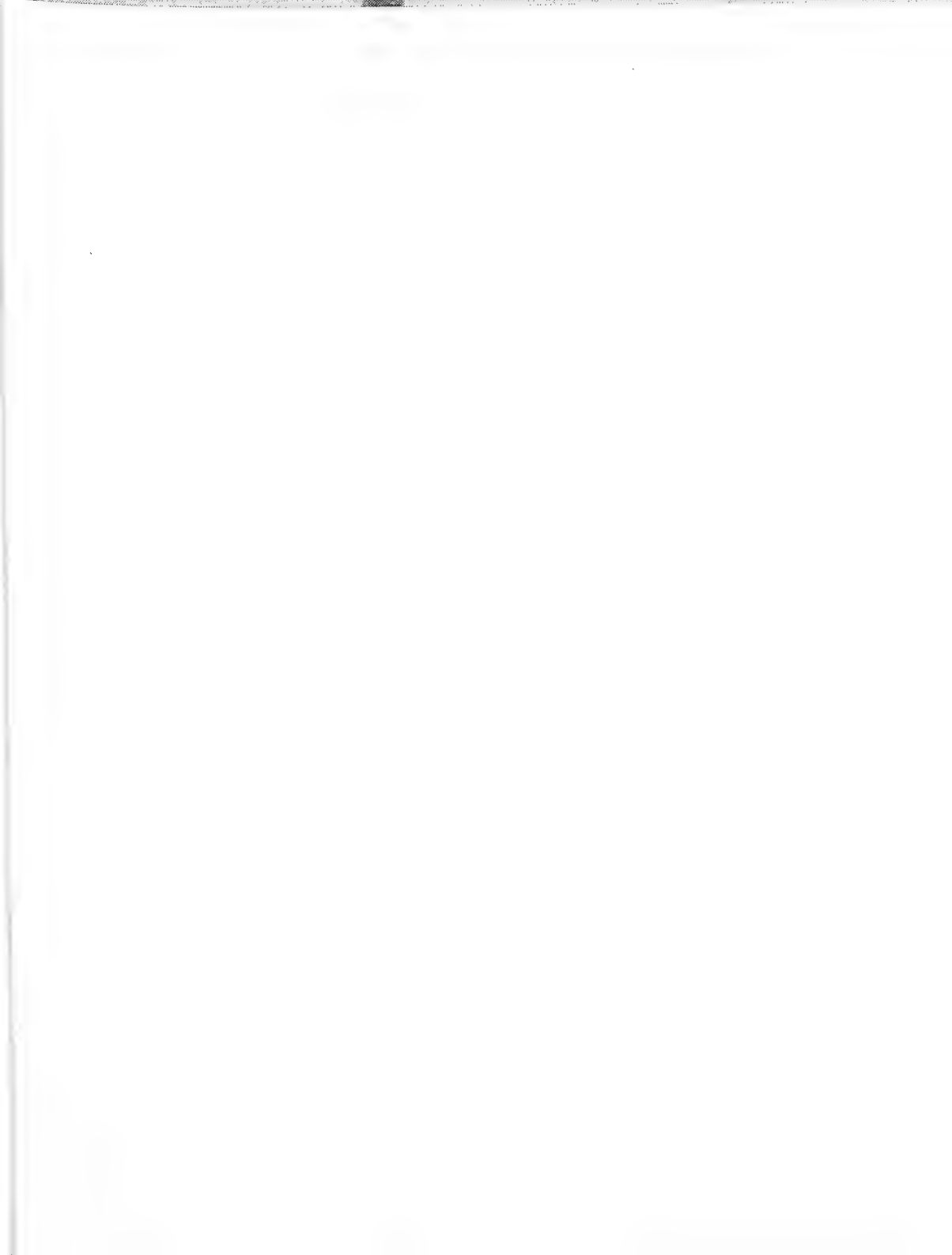
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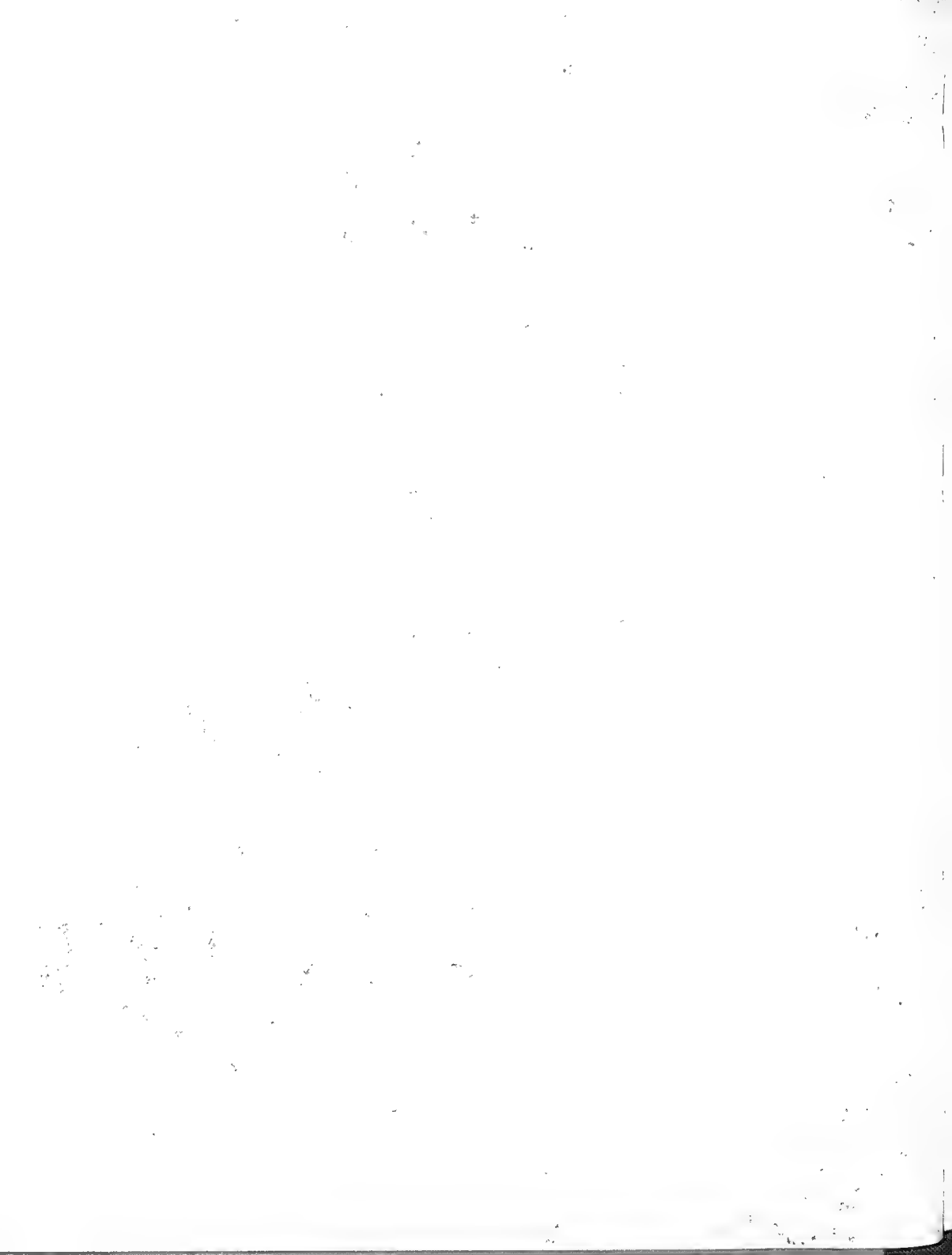
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The Statements and the opinions contained in the papers published in this Journal are the responsibility of the respective authors.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the G.F.N.C. is open to any person interested in Natural History. The 'Geelong Naturalist' is distributed free to all members, and the Club's reference and lending library is available.

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FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES

By Ted Errey

The Anakie-Steiglitz-Mt. Wallace region has long been a favorite area with local naturalists. The lightly-timbered ranges provide an attractive environment, their geological background is full of interest, and the history of goldmining around Steiglitz is a fascinating story, all too little of which has been adequately recorded and preserved.

Wild-flowers abound in all sections. Pink and white heath, red and yellow correas, and the yellow spikes of banksia give color through the winter, augmented often by fallen blossoms of the ironbarks, pulled from the treetops by feeding rosellas and gang-gangs.

In spring the species in flower are too numerous to list here. They range from tiny sundews and violets through orchids and everlasting, guinea-flowers and goodenias, mint-bushes and mistletoes. There are pea-bushes and daisy-bushes, grevilleas, wattles, rice-flowers and lilies of many kinds. And these are only the better known plants. It doesn't require very diligent searching to discover others, perhaps not so conspicuous but equally beautiful. Yet often these are just as common, but, because of their minuteness, too frequently passed by. Get down to earth with a hand lens, and a new botanical world opens up for you. Annual trigger-plants with perhaps one tiny flower held up a couple of centimetres on a threadlike stem, and pygmy sundews flat on the ground and maybe only a centimetre across, are both easy to overlook, but the lens shows them to be true copies of their taller, more familiar relations.

Birds too, are plentiful, and, with ridges, gullies and flats forming a varied terrain, and reservoirs, creeks and dams providing adequate water, many different species can be listed. Honey-eaters find nectar in heath and correa, eucalypt and banksia.

FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES (continued)

Tree-creepers and other insectivorous birds find food in the crevices of stringybark and ironbark, box and peppermint. Parrots and pardalotes have numerous hollows to nest in. Fantails and finches find protection in the prickly hedge wattle. Water fowl of many species are attracted by the group of reservoirs at Durdidwarrah, as well as by the waterholes on neighbouring farmland.

These Brisbane Ranges comprise one of two regions within an hour's drive of Geelong that are of particular botanical interest. The other around Anglesea, is, in the main, coastal heathland. The ranges are of Ordovician slates and sandstones laid down 400 to 500 million years ago. These extensive sediments were later intruded by gold-bearing quartz and capped in places by Tertiary sand and gravel. The ranges were formed by earth movements along the Rowsley Fault, a line of weakness running generally northerly from around Maude past Anakie and Bacchus Marsh towards Macedon. These movements, in Pleistocene times around two or three million years ago, thrust up the eastern edge of blocks, forming the Rowsley Scarp, which has since been deeply dissected by rejuvenated streams to form the complex ridges and gullies that now characterise the area.

The soils formed by the gradual break-down of the Ordovician rocks, the sand and gravel capping and the iron and other minerals involved, are rather poor as soils go, but like so many such soils they enable a wealth of variable and colorful plants to flourish. They are too poor and the rainfall too low for tall forest trees to appear, but a number of eucalypts do grow there. These provide a reasonably dense canopy for the ranges, with ideal habitat for mammals, reptiles and birds. For us they give a varied and attractive landscape, excellent firewood, and a honey flow for a number of hives of bees.

Three stringybarks, Messmate, and Red and Brown Stringy, are widespread. Red Box lends variety with its blue-green foliage and its round juvenile leaves. Red Ironbarks are conspicuous with their rough, often black trunks. Peppermints, both Narrow and Broad-leaved, are listed for the ranges. Of smooth-barked types, Swamp Gum and Manna Gum are found here. Long-leaf Box is widespread but not as numerous as other species. Its smooth bark would suggest a gum, but the long angled buds and long leaves are distinctive. Yellow Gum also is a masquerader. The large flowers and capsules show that it belongs to the ironbarks.



ROSY HEATH-MYRTLE

'Photo by Trevor Pescott.

FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES (continued)

During this spring, club members have made three official visits to the ranges. Two of these, in August and September, were weekend camps. The third was a Sunday excursion late in October.

The August camp was on the property of Mr. Bert Boardman, opposite the southern section of the Brisbane Ranges State Park. Mr. Boardman, whose daughter Voi (Mrs. John Williams) was the club's first secretary, was a foundation member. He continues to take part in club activities, and his knowledge of and experience in the bush have provided members with a fund of information on many topics.

Our various camps and excursions to the ranges during the last two years have enabled members to compile a list of over 200 species of plants, and names are being added on each visit. But this is not half of the 420 species quoted by Dr. J.H. Willis (Victorian Year Book, 1962) as being found in the area.

Quite a number of these plants make excellent garden subjects. Not that they can be dug up and transplanted, for this almost certainly would mean the death of the specimen. Apart from the legal aspect, (most of these plants are protected by law), a shrub removed from the bush means so much beauty lost to the environment. And such beauty is not likely to be added to home surroundings, for even small plants have already established deep root systems in their need to find moisture and a secure foothold in a dry rocky situation. Disturbance damages this system, and the plant is lost to both garden and bushland.

Seeds of many species can be collected at varying times of the year. This is the simplest method of propagating wattles, pea plants, and the many species of the daisy, or composite, family. These composites include the different everlastings, and the olearias or daisy-bushes, as well as the small annual or perennial daisies.

Cutting material is available all the year, and this method of propagation ensures that the habit and form of the new plant will be like that of the parent. For example, a good free-flowering form, or a prostrate habit, will be perpetuated in the progeny. Besides this, plants raised from cuttings usually flower earlier than seedlings, often in the first year when only a few inches high. Small side shoots, or tips about five or ten centimetres long are all that are needed when growing by this method.

FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES (continued)

My first experiment with Brisbane Ranges plants was carried out about twenty years ago. The Steiglitz Grevillea appealed as an attractive foliage plant before I knew it was a grevillea, and it flourished in our Belmont garden for years until it became a casualty during severe drought. Golden and Rosemary Grevilleas, too, grow readily from cuttings, as do both the red and the yellow forms of Common Correa. Other plants that have succeeded are Thin-leaf Wattle, Running Postman (both the red and the white varieties), Matted Bush-pea (an ideal ground-cover plant) and Rough Mint-bush.

Baeckea, or Rosy Heath-myrtle, is a low-growing shrub that would be an ornament in any garden, and I have seen no showier form than that found in the northern part of the ranges. On our October excursion this shrub helped to turn dry hillsides of shale and sandstone into magnificent rockeries, where it combined with daisy-bushes and mint-bushes, grevillea and tetradlea, and several species of pea-bushes and orchids to form a setting to delight the eye. This baeckea also should be fairly readily propagated by small cuttings.

To date, no mammal surveys have been carried out in the ranges by this club, but it is hoped that such work can be done in the next twelve months. An occasional koala is seen during most visits, and evidence of echidna activity among ant colonies is widespread. During our camps this spring at different ends of the ranges kangaroos have been seen grazing on grassland adjoining the forest. Up to twenty-five of them have been counted at the one time.

Other fields of study also remain largely unexplored. These ranges are much drier than the Otways, where most of our research has been done in the past. Though frogs and fungi may not be as plentiful here, there is nevertheless sufficient scope to make an examination worth while. Reptiles, spiders and various forms of insect life would perhaps be more diverse, or at least more conspicuous in this drier, more open terrain, where members interested in these subjects should find many rewarding opportunities.

All in all, the Brisbane Ranges constitute a region full of interest under a wide diversity of sub-headings, and few naturalists would fail to find there something of their own particular specialty.



HONEY-POTS

'Photo by Trevor Pescott

FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES (continued)

PLANT LIST :

<u>DENNSTAEDTIACEAE</u>	Culcita dubia	Common Ground-fern
	Pteridium esculentum	Aust. Bracken
<u>LINDSAYACEAE</u>	Lindsaya linearis	Screw Fern
<u>ADIANTACEAE</u>	Adiantum aethiopicum	Common Maidenhair
<u>ASPLENIACEAE</u>	Asplenium flabellifolium	Necklace Fern
<u>BLECHNACEAE</u>	Blechnum nudum	Fishbone Water-fern
	" minus	Soft Water-fern
<u>JUNCAGINACEAE</u>	Triglochin procerum	Water-ribbons
<u>GRAMINEAE</u>	Tetrarrhena distichophylla	Hairy Rice-grass
	Poa australis	Tussock Grass
	Agrostis avenacea	Blown Grass
	Phragmites communis	Common Reed
	Themeda australis	Kangaroo Grass
<u>CYPERACEAE</u>	Cyperus tenellus	Tiny Flat-sedge
	Eleocharis sphacelata	Tall Spike-rush
	Gahnia radula	Thatch Saw-sedge
	Lepidosperma laterale	Variable Sword-sedge
	Carex appressa	Tall Sedge
<u>JUNCACEAE</u>	Luzula meridionalis	Field Woodrush
	Juncus pallidus	Pale Rush
<u>LILIACEAE</u>	Xanthorrhoea australis	Austral Grass-tree
	Lomandra filiformis	Wattle Mat-rush
	" multiflora	Many-flower Mat-rush
	" longifolia	Spiny-headed Mat-rush
	Chamaescilla corymbosa	Blue Stars
	Dichopogon strictus	Chocolate Lily
	Thysanotus patersonii	Twining Fringe-lily
	Laxmannia sessiliflora	Dwarf Wire-lily
	Dianella revoluta	Black-anther Flax-lily
	Anguillaria dioica	Early Nancy
	Burchardia umbellata	Milkmaids
<u>ORCHIDACEAE</u>	Thelymitra aristata	Scented Sun-orchid
	" ixioides	Dotted "
	" flexuosa	Twisted "
	" antennifera	Rabbit-ears
	Calochilus campestris	Copper Beard-orchid
	" robertsonii	Purplish Beard-orchid
	Diuris longifolia	Wallflower Orchid
	" maculata	Leopard "
	" sulphurea	Tiger "

FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES (continued)

<u>ORCHIDACEAE</u> (cont.)	<i>Microtis unifolia</i>	Common Onion-orchid
	<i>Prasophyllum elatum</i>	Tall Leek-orchid
	<i>Caleana major</i>	Large Duck-orchid
	<i>Acianthus caudatus</i>	Mayfly Orchid
	" <i>reniformis</i>	Mosquito "
	" <i>exsertus</i>	Gnat "
	<i>Lyperanthus nigricans</i>	Red-beaks
	<i>Caladenia menziesii</i>	Hare Orchid
	" <i>dilatata</i>	Green-comb Spider-orchid
	" <i>deformis</i>	Bluebeard Caladenia
	" <i>carnea</i>	Pink Fingers
	" <i>caerulea</i>	Blue Caladenia
	" <i>cucullata</i>	Hooded "
	" <i>angustata</i>	Musky "
	" <i>iridescens</i>	Bronze "
	<i>Glossodia major</i>	Wax-lip Orchid
	<i>Corybas diemenicuss</i>	Slaty Helmet-orchid
	" <i>dilatatus</i>	Veined " "
	<i>Pterostylis parviflora</i>	Tiny Greenhood
	" <i>alata</i>	Striped Greenhood
	" <i>pedunculata</i>	Maroonhood "
	" <i>nana</i>	Dwarf "
	" <i>nutans</i>	Nodding "
	" <i>curta</i>	Blunt "
	" <i>longifolia</i>	Tall "
	" <i>rufa</i>	Rusty-hood
<u>CASUARINACEAE</u>	<i>Casuarina littoralis</i>	Black She-oak
<u>PROTEACEAE</u>	<i>Persoonia juniperina</i>	Prickly Geebung
	<i>Isopogon ceratophyllus</i>	Horny Cone-bush
	<i>Grevillea steiglitziana</i>	Brisbane Range Grevillea
	" <i>rosmarinifolia</i>	Rosemary "
	" <i>parviflora</i>	Small-flower "
	" <i>chrysophaea</i>	Golden "
	<i>Hakea sericea</i>	Silky Hakea
	<i>Lomatia ilicifolia</i>	Holly Lomatia
	<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia
<u>SANTALACEAE</u>	<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i>	Cherry Ballart
<u>LORANTHACEAE</u>	<i>Amyema pendulum</i>	Drooping Mistletoe
<u>POLYGONACEAE</u>	<i>Polygonum minus</i>	Slender Knotweed
<u>CHENOPODIACEAE</u>	<i>Rhagodia hastata</i>	Saloop
<u>PORTULACACEAE</u>	<i>Caladrinia calyptrata</i>	Pink Purslane

FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES (continued)

<u>CARYOPHYLLACEAE</u>	<i>Stellaria pungens</i>	Prickly Starwort
<u>RANUNCULACEAE</u>	<i>Clematis microphylla</i>	Small-leaved Clematis
<u>Lauraceae</u>	<i>Cassytha glabella</i>	Slender Dodder-laurel
	" <i>melantha</i>	Coarse " "
<u>DROSERACEAE</u>	<i>Drosera planchonii</i>	Climbing Sundew
	" <i>auriculata</i>	Tall "
	" <i>glanduligera</i>	Scarlet "
	" <i>whittakeri</i>	Scented "
<u>CRASSULACEAE</u>	<i>Crassula sieberana</i>	Sieber Crassula
<u>TREMANDRACEAE</u>	<i>Tetradlea ciliata</i>	Pink-bells
	" <i>ericifolia</i>	Heath Pink-bells
<u>PITTIOSPORACEAE</u>	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Sweet Bursaria
	<i>Rhytidosporum procumbens</i>	White Marianth
	<i>Billardiera scandens</i>	Common Apple-berry
<u>ROSACEAE</u>	<i>Rubus parvifolius</i>	Small-leaf Bramble
	<i>Acaena anserinifolia</i>	Bidgee-widgee
	" <i>echinata</i>	Sheep's Burr
<u>MIMOSACEAE</u>	<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses
	" <i>aculeatissima</i>	Thin-leaf Wattle
	" <i>brownii</i>	Heath Wattle
	" <i>aspera</i>	Rough Wattle
	" <i>armata</i>	Hedge "
	" <i>gunnii</i>	Ploughshare Wattle
	" <i>acinacea</i>	Gold-dust " "
	" <i>pycnantha</i>	Golden Wattle
	" <i>myrtifolia</i>	Myrtle " "
	" <i>melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood
	" <i>implexa</i>	Lightwood
	" <i>oxycedrus</i>	Spike Wattle
	" <i>longifolia</i>	Sallow "
	" <i>mitchellii</i>	Mitchell's Wattle
	" <i>mearnsii</i>	Black "
	" <i>dealbata</i>	Silver "
<u>PAPILIONACEAE</u>	<i>Gompholobium huegelii</i>	Common Wedge-pea
	<i>Sphaerolobium vimineum</i>	Leafless Globe-pea
	<i>Daviesia virgata</i>	Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea
	" <i>ulicifolia</i>	Gorse Bitter-pea
	<i>Pultenaea pedunculata</i>	Matted Bush-pea
	" <i>daphnoides</i>	Large-leaf Bush-pea
	" <i>gunnii</i>	Golden Bush-pea
	" <i>scabra</i>	Rough " "
	" <i>humilis</i>	Bush-pea

FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES (continued)

<u>PAPILIONACEAE</u> (cont.)	<i>Aotus ericoides</i>	Common Aotus
	<i>Dillwynia sericea</i>	Showy Parrot-pea
	" <i>glaberrima</i>	Smooth " "
	<i>Platylobium obtusangulum</i>	Common Flat-pea
	<i>Bossiaea prostrata</i>	Creeping Bossiaea
	<i>Hovea heterophylla</i>	Common Hovea
	<i>Indigofera australis</i>	Australian Indigo
	<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman
	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Purple Coral-pea
<u>GERANIACEAE</u>	<i>Pelargonium rodneyanum</i>	Magenta Stork's-bill
	<i>Geranium solanderi</i>	Austral Crane's-bill
<u>OXALIDACEAE</u>	<i>Oxalis corniculata</i>	Yellow Wood-sorrel
<u>RUTACEAE</u>	<i>Boronia anemonifolia</i>	Sticky Boronia
	<i>Eriostemon verrucosus</i>	Fairy Wax-flower
	<i>Phebalium lamprophyllum</i>	Shiny Phebalium
	<i>Correa reflexa</i>	Common Correa
<u>POLYGALACEAE</u>	<i>Comesperma volubile</i>	Love Creeper
<u>EUPHORBIACEAE</u>	<i>Poranthera microphylla</i>	Small Poranthera
<u>STACKHOUSIACEAE</u>	<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>	Creamy Stackhousia
<u>RHAMNACEAE</u>	<i>Pomaderris prunifolia</i>	Pomaderris
	<i>Spyridium parvifolium</i>	Aust. Dusty Miller
	<i>Cryptandra tomentosa</i>	Prickly Cryptandra
<u>MALVACEAE</u>	<i>Gynatrix pulchella</i>	Hemp Bush
<u>DILLENIIACEAE</u>	<i>Hibbertia fasciculata</i>	Bundled Guinea-flower
	" <i>stricta</i>	Erect " "
<u>HYPERICACEAE</u>	<i>Hypericum gramineum</i>	Small St. John's Wort
<u>VIOLACEAE</u>	<i>Viola betonicifolia</i>	Showy Violet
	" <i>hederacea</i>	Ivy-leaf Violet
	" <i>sieberana</i>	Tiny Violet
<u>THYMELAEACEAE</u>	<i>Pimelea octophylla</i>	Woolly Rice-flower
	" <i>humilis</i>	Common " "
	" <i>glauca</i>	Smooth " "
	" <i>linifolia</i>	Slender " "
<u>MYRTACEAE</u>	<i>Euc. macrorhyncha</i>	Red Stringybark
	" <i>baxteri</i>	Brown "
	" <i>obliqua</i>	Messmate "
	" <i>viminalis</i>	Manna Gum
	" <i>leucoxylon</i>	Yellow Gum
	" <i>sideroxylon</i>	Red Ironbark
	" <i>radiata</i>	Narrow-leaf Peppermint
	" <i>ovata</i>	Swamp Gum

November
1976

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FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES (continued)

MYRTACEAE (cont.)

Euc. gonicalyx Long-leaf Box
" camaldulensis River Red Gum
" polyanthemus Red Box
Leptospermum myrsinoides Silky Tea-tree
" juniperinum Prickly "
" lanigerum Woolly "

ONAGRACEAE

Baeckea ramosissima Rosy Baeckea
Epilobium cinereum Variable Willow-herb

HALORAGACEAE

Haloragis tetragyna Common Raspwort

UMBELLIFERAE

Myriophyllum propinquum Water-milfoil
Hydrocotyle laxiflora Stinking Pennywort
Platysace heterophylla Slender Platysace
" lanceolata Shrubby "

EPACRIDACEAE

Epacris impressa Common Heath
Astroloma humifusum Cranberry Heath
Leucopogon virgatus Common Beard-heath
" biflorus Twin-flower Beard-heath
" glacialis Twisted Beard-heath
Monotoca scoparia Prickly Broom-heath

CONVOLVULACEAE

Acrotriche serrulata Honey-pots
Brachyloma daphnoides Daphne Heath
Dichondra repens Kidney-weed
Convolvulus erubescens Pink Bindweed

SCROPHULARIACEAE

Gratiola peruviana Austral Brooklime
Parahebe perfoliata Diggers' Speedwell
Veronica calycina Hairy Speedwell

LABIATAE

Prostanthera denticulata Rough Mint-bush
" nivea Snowy " "

RUBIACEAE

Mentha australis River Mint
Asperula scoparia Prickly Woodruff

CAMPANULACEAE

Wahlenbergia gracilentata Annual Bluebell
" quadrifida Sprawling "
" stricta Tall "

LOBELIACEAE

Lobelia alata Angled Lobelia

GOODENIACEAE

Goodenia ovata Hop Goodenia
" lanata Trailing Goodenia
" geniculata Bent Goodenia

BRUNONIACEAE

Dampiera stricta Blue Dampiera
Brunonia australis Blue Pincushion

STYLIDIACEAE

Stylidium graminifolium Grass Trigger-plant

FOCUSING ON THE BRISBANE RANGES (continued)COMPOSITAE

Lagenophora stipitata	Blue Bottle-daisy
Brachycome cardiocarpa	Swamp Daisy
" uliginosa	Daisy
" multifida	Cut-leaf Daisy
Olearia pannosa	Velvet Daisy-bush
" sp. (affin. pimeleoides)	
(ramulosa)	Daisy bush
" teretifolia	Cypress Daisy-bush
Cassinia arcuata	Drooping Cassinia
" aculeata	Common Cassinia
Helipterum demissum	Sunray
Helichrysum baxteri	Fringed Everlasting
" apiculatum	Common "
" semipapposum	Clustered "
" scorpioides	Button "
" obtusifolium	Everlasting
" bracteatum	Golden Everlasting
" leucopsidium	Satin "
" rosmarinifolium	Rosemary "
" obcordatum	Grey "
Millotia tenuifolia	Soft Millotia
Craspedia glauca	Common Billy-buttons
Senecio linearifolius	Fireweed Groundsel
" lautus	Variable "
" quadridentatus	Cotton Fireweed
Cymbonotus preissianus	Austral Bear's-ear
Microseris scapigera	Yam-daisy

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THE EASTERN PARK

By Eleanor Sampson

I wonder if my contemporaries who still live in Geelong would be interested in my memories of the Eastern Park from about 1900.

I did not know, until I read the article in INVESTIGATOR (Vol.10 No.4, Dec.1975, pages 114-120) that my grandfather (Alfred Douglass) had had anything to do with the Park or the Botanical Gardens. My father however (H.P. Douglass) had an adventure there when he was a small boy in the early 1860s. Somebody was shooting in the Park and Dad got some pellets in his foot. A doctor removed them but missed one near the root of a big toe. This pellet had an inch of runway under the skin and, as an occasional treat, we would be allowed to push it up and down. Quite fascinating!

From 1900 (I was seven) the Park was the joy of our afternoon walks as it was close to Corio Villa where we all grew up. We children learned to know it intimately. We found the best wild flower patches. We gathered mushrooms. We followed the grass cutters and helped rake up the haycocks. Then we became keen birdsnesters. The gardeners turned a blind eye as we were all the best of friends and they knew that we never took more than one egg from a nest - a strict rule made by my father. Our star turn was finding the nest of a strange bird. It was identified as a "Rufous Breasted Thickhead" by Charles (later Sir Charles) Belcher. To his, and our, grief the nest was rifled and torn down before the eggs hatched.

Once we had to take refuge from a bad thunderstorm in a summer house. Hailstones the size of pigeon eggs fell. The storm over, we hurried out and collected these monstrosities in our handkerchiefs and rushed home. Alas, they had melted and we had nothing to show.

THE EASTERN PARK (continued)

Some time in the early 1900s we tried to make a map of the Park. My father pointed out that the boundary shape was quite good but distances and proportions all wrong. First lessons in getting things to scale and accurate measurement learned but the map was too difficult and never made.

Many times I accompanied my father to the football matches when the Geelong Club played on their old ground before the Park. Most of the supporters came and went on foot. Dad always spent some of the match in the "Visitors Reserve". Heated remarks there might be, even some bad language but no hooligans.

My first experiments with a bicycle were on the Park roads and more than once ended in the branches of the big pine trees near the Rotunda. Later still first efforts in driving a car. No disasters but some anxious moments.

The Rotunda was the scene of many parties. The swings were very popular. Birthday parties, school treats and even grown up gatherings were held there. How many of you remember it?

Last time I was in Australia, 1970, staying with my sister at Ocean Grove, we made a circuit of the Park just to see how much remained of what we remembered and had so much enjoyed.

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CATTLE EGRETS

By Trevor Pescott

Cattle Egrets are now regular visitors to the Geelong area, although prior to the 1950's, they were known here; through the 1960's, they became established, primarily as winter visitors and a large flock is now seen each year in the Waurin Ponds - Highton area.

My diary records them this year as arriving on May 3, with my last sighting on August 29 - other observers may extend these times, of course.

On October 8, there was one "colored" bird near Freshwater Creek, while on October 21, about 40 "colored" birds were feeding at the receding flood waters over the Belmont Common.

To date, there are no breeding records here.

FALLEN GIANTS

By Joyce Hunt

A noisy truck
grinds through the city streets,
fouling the air with its exhaust,
bearing three fallen giants -
(as the tumbrel bore its load to execution) -
to the pulping mill.
The giants are fettered. Heavy chains secure them,
perhaps lest they should rise
from their ignoble death,
and stride again back to their place of birth
where, from the fertile earth
two hundred years ago they sprang
in Otway forest. There they grew.
They thrust their roots deep in the soil
extracting nutrients,
seeking the particles of moisture,
pumping them, pumpless, to the highest point
until, at length, a hundred feet and more
above the earth.
And the strong winds blew, testing their strength,
and the sunshine smiled on them in benediction,
knowing they - unlike sophisticated man -
could make full use of solar power unaided.
Gentle winds riffled their leaves; And birds
built nests and raised their young,
and sang among the branches.

Then there came, shattering the silence of the forest -
cacophonous - strident - drone and squeal of chain saws,
shouting voices, man-made machines belching foul air,
cutting out tracks, removing everything
that lay before their huge devouring wheels.

FALLEN GIANTS (continued)

Not the soft drum sound of impending danger,
but the sharp, cruel crack
as axe bites deep into the living trunk
before the chain saw starts its massive task.
Suddenly there is a shout, and clear against the sky
a swaying movement.
Then a ghastly crash and groaning as the giant falls -
splintering
slaying with its death plants, saplings,
little creatures which, in life,
it would have saved, protected.

Now these marvels of machinery -
breathing without lungs,
pumping without pumps,
givers of shelter, shade and beauty
and cause for wonder - grown by scorned Nature,
felled by clever Man, - lie on a trailer
lifeless; bereft of beauty shape and symmetry.

Ah, gently draw a veil upon their future fate -
reduced to pulp, made into cartons, boxes,
packaging - and then to be consigned
to garbage cans.

Oh, when the gentle rain falls in the Otways
surely it could be
the tears of angels as they weep
for Fallen Giants.

BIRDS IN AN OCEAN GROVE GARDEN

By Clare Jones

When we came to live in Ocean Grove, 26 years ago, we bought several blocks of land, and built our house, "Gwent", on the ridge overlooking the river estuary, and the ocean.

It was then a quiet, small, seaside resort, with its few shops, Post Office, school, churches, and boarding houses, rather dominated by the old Coffee Palace, and some scattered homes and farms. In our area there were only three or four houses, surrounded by thick bush, wattle, tea tree and prickly scrub, and no sealed roads. This made a haven for birds and rabbits, but even then, the now-noxious "boneseed" shrub was beginning to take over.

Soon with the subdivision of land, and more tracks, streets, and houses springing up, many of the birds have disappeared. We keep most of our garden as natural as possible, but even then, during the last few years, most of our smaller birds, such as Blue Wrens, robins, finches, Willie Wagtails, pardalotes, fantails, and many of the varieties of honeyeaters are seldom seen; whereas the larger ones, such as wattle birds, Blackbirds, Starlings and sparrows have increased. The odd Mudlarks (pee-wees), magpies, butcher birds, Grey Thrushes, Indian Turtle-doves, and very occasionally Kookaburras come, but not as often as they used to do. It is a long time since I have seen a kingfisher (sacred) or a blue heron here. The Silver gulls and ravens come to scrounge food when the campers depart! Sometimes wonderful formations of Pelicans, from the river, cruise over the house, with their slow majestic flight - a joy to watch.

When we first came here a quiet, shy, Ground-thrush, with its black, half-moon, breast markings could be found scratching about among the tea tree mould, or that lovely Rufous Whistler and his mate, with his melodious song. Alas, never heard here now.

BIRDS IN AN OCEAN GROVE GARDEN (continued)

I am very suspicious that the numerous underfed, stray, cats, in the neighbourhood frighten off these smaller birds, when they come to drink, and splash about in the birds' baths under the trees. Also some of the commonly used insecticides these days, may be another deterrent.

Another great joy are the parrots, mostly Crimson and Eastern Rosellas, which swoop in with a great chatteration, to hang in the big gum trees, at blossom time; then walk about the lawn, and splash, three or four together, in the birds bath, while the plebian starlings await their turn!

My latest delight and surprise, is the arrival (in March) of a charming little grey-crested Cockateil, who now seems to have calmly adopted us, ignoring all the other birds. She pecks about quietly, quite alone; head down, foraging for grass seeds on the lawns. If surprised, she flies very quickly, up into a tree, but soon returns, until she too, is ready for a bath. The tameness of this little bird makes me wonder if she is an escaped aviary pet? I have never seen, nor heard of one before, south of the dividing ranges.

During this very dry summer, the birds' baths have to be refilled several times a day, and an interesting observation is that, one in particular, is always ringed with thirsty bees, which fly off until the fresh water is full, then rapidly return for more.

Perhaps the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve is responsible for attracting many of the birds' away from our garden. I hope this is the case. There they have a wonderful tract of undisturbed, and unspoiled bushland, much the same as it has always been, probably for hundreds of years.

For anyone who has not been there, I thoroughly recommend spending a few hours exploring its walking tracks, and discovering its charm. Most of this has been made possible by voluntary labour, and enthusiasm, shared by many of our Geelong Field Naturalists Club members - for the benefit of all.

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AN HOUR COUNT No. 19

The Lakes National Park, Victoria

By Roy Wheeler

In the Easter of 1961 Mrs. Wheeler and I first visited this Park in Gippsland with the Bird Observers Club. In those days the sandy track in from Loch Sport was just negotiable by cars and the main B.O.C. party came across from Paynesville by boat.

In the early days this Peninsula with Lake Reeves on one side and Lake Victoria on the other was part of a cattle run called Mosquito Point. Mr. Fred Barton was mainly responsible for the area being made a National Park in 1927. Up till shortly before the B.O.C. visit Mr. Barton and his family lived in a cottage at the Point and he kindly allowed the Club the use of it as a base during the visit. The camp was a most successful one and 85 species of birds were recorded for what it was known as then, Spermwhale Head National Park.

Our next visit to the Park was in May 1976 when we were on a visit to various National Parks in Gippsland with Mr. Len Robinson. Now known as The Lakes National Park the entrance by road is still at Loch Sport. A short distance in is a very fine lookout which gives an admirable view of the lakes and the park. The road then forks one going via Lake Reeves on the right, the other via Lake Victoria on the left, to the main picnic area at Point Wilson. It was a warm sunny day and the Pink Heath and the flowering banksias made a beautiful sight whilst great droves of Little and Red Wattlebirds were noisily on the move. We reached the picnic area just on lunch time and parked at the barriers, cars are not allowed on the lovely wide picnic area interspersed by trees. A really lovely spot. Where Fred Barton's house once stood is the Fred Barton Shelter. In it is a plaque which states "This plaque on the site of the old Barton Homestead in recognition of the service of Fred C.W. Barton.

Honorary Ranger 1927-1958

Part Time Ranger 1958-1969."

AN HOUR COUNT (continued)

A tremendous record of dedicated service covering 42 years to the National Parks Service.

The official brochure says that the Lakes National Park covers 2482 hectares, is a Gippsland Lakes environment with varied and rich bird life both bush birds and water birds. Noted for kangaroos, wallabies and emu and sand plain wild flowers especially Thryptomine micrantha.

Whilst having lunch at a table close to the Fred Barton Shelter Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Wheeler and I did an hour count.

The Lakes National Park, Vic. May 28, 1976. Pt. Wilson picnic area "Banksia" overlooking Lake Victoria. Fine and warm and sunny with no wind. Birds in order of sighting. Midday to 1.00p.m.

Superb Blue Wren, 7; Red Wattlebird, 48; Eastern Spinebill, 16; Grey Thrush, 5; Magpie Lark, 2; Pelican, 5; Silver Gull, 35; Crested Tern, 30; Caspian Tern, 1; Willie Wagtail, 1; Black Cormorant, 5; Pacific Gull, 2; Starling, 9; Crimson Rosella, 7; Grey Currawong, 4; White-eared Honeyeater, 6; White-backed Magpie, 3; Chestnut Teal, 32; Brown Thornbill, 2; Little Pied Cormorant, 3; Yellow-winged Honeyeater, 4; Yellow Robin, 1; Little Wattlebird, 2; Little Black Cormorant, 1; Black Swan, 2; Grey Fantail, 1; Scarlet Robin, 1; Yellow-faced Honeyeater, 6.

Total 28 species and 245 individuals.

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BIRD and PHOTOGRAPHIC HIDES A SUCCESS

By Jack Wheeler

On the 1st September, 1975, two wooden hides, constructed by the Bellarine Shire Council under the Federal Government 'RED Scheme', were transported to the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve, one to be placed on the north bank of the south dam and the other on the north shore of the north dam - this latter to replace an old hessian hide previously in use.

Being of treated pine structure, 1.8 metres wide, 1.6 metres deep, and 1.8 metres high, and having a wooden floor, it took 6 men to unload from the trailer and place in position, close to the water's edge. Only the northern-placed hide has a floor, so is classified as a "deluxe" model. Inside are seats, bench space for binoculars and camera equipment. Shutters are on three sides, but usually the front shutter is used. Both are provided with an iron roof and door for entrance and exit. Catches had to be dispensed with on the doors owing to possible locking from outside and trapping the observers inside - which did happen on one occasion.

The hides were an instant success and hardly a day went by without being occupied. In one case a family from Melbourne brought their lunch and spent the best part of a day in the north hide, and I was told later that it was one of their best days at birding since joining the Bird Observers Club.

The exterior of both hides have been painted with very dark brown and green paint in order to camouflage, and shrubs have been planted to give future cover. However, during a recent storm, a very large sheoak was blown down beside the north hide, hiding it from the north track, and luckily no damage done.

On 19th March last, a record book and pen was placed in the north hide to record sightings of birds observed coming in to drink and bathe, and the result was very rewarding.

BIRD AND PHOTOGRAPHIC HIDES A SUCCESS (continued)

On summarising the reports from that date right up until 6th November is as follows.

Fifty eight observers recorded their observations and to date fifty one species of birds have been listed.

Painted Quail	1	Brown Thornbill	18
Spotted Turtle Dove	2	White-browed Scrub-wren	18
Common Bronzewing	1	Superb Blue-wren	40
White-faced Heron	1	Orange-winged Sittella	1
Crimson Rosella	1	White-throated Treecreeper	1
Eastern Rosella	9	Mistletoe Bird	2
Blue-winged Parrot	5	Eastern Striated Pardalote	2
Kookaburra	2	Silvereye	16
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1	Brown-headed Honeyeater	1
Grey Fantail	31	Eastern Spinebill	6
Willie Wagtail	4	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	10
Satin Flycatcher	1	White-eared Honeyeater	2
Scarlet Robin	19	White-plumed Honeyeater	15
Red-capped Robin	2	Crescent Honeyeater	1
Flame Robin	22	Yellow-winged Honeyeater	41
Pink Robin	3	Red Wattlebird	1
Yellow Robin	17	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	4
Golden Whistler	14	Red-browed Finch	36
Rufous Whistler	2	Goldfinch	34
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	3	Greenfinch	2
Blackbird	5	Pied Currawong	1
Grey Thrush	10	Grey Currawong	1
White-fronted Chat	1	Raven	2
Striated Thornbill	7	White-backed Magpie	6
Little Thornbill	4	Rufous Fantail	1
Yellow-tailed Thornbill	20		

These totals are only the number of times the species were observed and does not record the total birds each time. During one session I had 30 Goldfinches come in and almost surrounded the dam which is only 10 metres across when full, and looked a grand sight, and it was noted that one bird had almost pure white legs and toes. It was not uncommon to have 20 or so Red-browed Finches in together and it is quite interesting to note their various methods of bathing.



YELLOW-WINGED HONEYEATERS AND BANKSIA
SILVEREYE and RED-BROWED FINCHES

'Photo by Ron Lavery.

'Photos by Eric Bound.

BIRD AND PHOTOGRAPHIC HIDES A SUCCESS (continued)

Superb Blue-wrens are very regular visitors and come in usually in family groups of five and six. The most timid birds are the Flame Robins who usually have to put up with attacks from the Scarlet Robins, particularly the females.

The sighting of a Red-capped Robin was made by Club Secretary Gordon McCarthy and son Glenn. It was photographed to substantiate their sighting and it was interesting to note that it was also seen at the hide the next day, but has not been seen since - perhaps it was on its way to Tasmania to give the birdoes over there a bit of a shock.

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A SNAKE STORY WITH A DIFFERENCE

By Jack Wheeler

Returning to our motel unit at Port MacDonnell in S.A. from a day on the beach recently, I was amazed to see on the edge of the bitumen road what appeared to be an enormous snake. I pulled up suddenly and reversed and discovered that what I had thought to be one huge snake which had been run over, was in fact two snakes, one dead and the other alive, but the live snake was endeavouring to swallow the dead snake, head first but still had a good half of a metre of dead snake to swallow, and in so doing was gradually pulling off the road the remains, into long green grass. Before succeeding to do this I had hurriedly got my camera from the car and took whatever photo I could in the little time I had.

What interested me was that both species of snake were the same, being Black Snakes, but the live one was enormous with a body thickness as thick as my wrist and even then it was having great difficulty in getting the snake down; it would have been interesting to have observed the final result. This proves that snakes can be cannibals during their life, and the myth that snakes swallowed their young for safety was in fact believed by die hards almost right up until recent times.

LAMENT FOR A FOREST GIANT

By Gwen Yarnold

Red Cedar (Toona australis), once the pride of the Queensland and New South Wales rainforests, tall, handsome and fragrant - one of the few of our deciduous trees, the bright, distinctive copper-red of its new leaves in spring glowing in the midst of the evergreens - is now a rare sight, except perhaps in State Forests and National Parks, and occasionally occurring naturally in inaccessible country.

The habitat of this tree is from Illawarra, N.S.W. to Queensland, more particularly in the warmer and moister regions. It grows to 70 metres, with a trunk diameter up to 3 metres.

The early slaughter of this beautiful tree provides an ugly picture, surely, when trees that had grown for many centuries, some as long as 2000 years, were cut down ruthlessly by convicts working in gangs either for the Government or in some cases for free settlers. These Cedar-getters were a wild, lawless lot, and many reports speak of the wastefulness of their working, destroying more timber than they used, leaving great masses of Cedar to rot unheeded on the forest ground.

Few timbers can surpass the Red Cedar for beauty of colour and figuration and distinctive fragrance, and its great value for furniture manufacture brought about this avaricious, wanton destruction.

Exploitation started two years after the first settlement. Cutting started on the Hawkesbury River about 1790, and rapidly extended into all other areas. By 1890 the Cedar industry as it existed for almost a century was finished. And so, in just 100 years, man had practically eliminated one of our forest's most beautiful trees.

Although there are still large areas of rainforest where Cedar could grow, few deliberate efforts are made to grow it in Australia. Whenever these trees occur naturally there are moths that damage them. These moths (Hypsipla robusta) lay their eggs in the growing parts of the tree - the shoot tips, flower buds and young fruits. The eggs hatch into larvae which proceed to eat away inside the tissue of the tree. They can completely destroy flowers and seed, but in the long run the most serious damage to the tree itself, for the grubs can kill the main growing tip.



DEBRA PESCOTT WITH PRIMROSE

JUNIOR PAGES

One evening a man came around to our house with about six kids and a very sick brush tail possum. We think it ate rat sac but were not sure. The possum was a full grown female and we didn't think she would live. Anyway I asked dad if I could look after her if she lived. We called her Primrose.

The next morning as soon as I got up I went to see if she was alright, and she was. Dad said if she lived for about five days she may live for a long time, and she did live.

For about one and a half weeks she lived in a cage about 18 inches square while she was still very sick. Her hair started coming off and all her skin started coming off like dandruff. You could pull it off with no trouble. When she got a bit stronger, we put her into a larger cage which was about four feet long and eighteen inches high, and the door came off. She was in that cage for about a month before one night I forgot to close the door properly and she got away. I looked everywhere but didn't find her. The next night the dog was barking so I went down to the shed and Primrose was there so I got an apple and led her out. I put her back into the cage.

Primrose was smart, she would chew the wood up at the front of the door when we came and the back when we went away and so eventually she had gnawed her way out of the wood and bent back the wire. This time she was away for 3 or 4 days and nights. We found her the same way as we did the first time, the dog was barking. We put her back into the small cage and she was there for about five days. When she got away this time, she had only just got away and I found her sitting up eating the peppercorn tree, I put her back in the cage and fed her. We kept her for another four weeks before giving her to Mr. and Mrs. Bailey who are looking after her now.

All the time we had her we fed her on apples, bananas, oranges, dates, condensed milk, bread and butter, plain bread, bread and honey and all native plants around the house.

A LAST WORD

By Trevor Pescott

The time has come again for the Geelong Field Naturalists Club to make submissions to the Land Conservation Council in relation to the use of all public land, this time in the Corangamite Study Area.

Our previous recommendations to the Council related to the Melbourne Area, and our submission was generally well received.

The Corangamite Area covers the Otway Ranges as well as the Western District, and both of these areas are of vital interest to us; we are concerned particularly in the Otways, for we feel we know them well enough to speak with authority - which we will do of course.

Of particular importance is the establishment of a major reserve of National Park status covering the Cape Otway - Parker River - Calder River - Aire River region, a park of significance in even the guidelines laid down by the L.C.C.

There is, too, the additions to Angahook Park, the Lorne Park extensions, the Carlisle heathlands, coastal areas west of the Cape, Tower Hill, Lady Julia Percy Island, Lake Corangamite and a score of small, vital areas.

So our submission will be prepared and lodged with the Council, and then we must wait until proposed recommendations can be made; these will appear in due course, and we must be prepared to go through them in detail, and make constructive comments on amendments.

Of course we are not alone - many other Field Naturalists Clubs as well as development protagonists will be similarly engaged.

Only time will tell how wisely the Council will act.

TREVOR PESCOTT

Hon. Editor

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The Statements and the opinions contained in the papers published in this Journal are the responsibility of the respective authors.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the G.F.N.C. is open to any person interested in Natural History. The 'Geelong Naturalist' is distributed free to all members, and the Club's reference and lending library is available.

HOW OLD ARE OUR RED GUMS . . . By Ted Errey

Members who visited Wyperfeld National Park recently were pleased to find that numbers of eucalypt seedlings had germinated at the edge of the water in Black Flat and Lake Brambruk. These would have been either Black Box or Red Gum, as mature trees of both species are plentiful thereabouts.

There is often speculation as to the age of some of our huge Red Gums, obviously veterans that have outlived many generations of humans. A letter to the Forests Commission on this subject several years ago brought this interesting reply.

"Your enquiry regarding the age of the Murray and Western District red gums cannot be answered with any certainty, as considerable controversy surrounds this subject.

"Carbon dating of various specimens has placed the ages of apparently veteran trees at but a few hundred years. This might be regarded as being negated by the fact that in his book of 1883, 'Recollection of Squatting in Victoria - 1841/1851' (published by George Robertson), Edmund Curr referred to red gums in the Moira area as being very large and aged in the eighteen forties, and that many of these trees still survive today in even more mature form.

"Ring counts of other similar veteran trees in the same area, taken in conjunction with internal flood marks originating from known periods of heavy flooding since the eighteen eighties, suggest that some of the trees could be as much as 1,500 years old. As yet it has been impossible to confirm the correctness of either method of estimating the ages of the trees, hence the controversy referred to here."

Whichever estimate is correct, these picturesque eucalypts, their gnarled trunks and limbs contorted into fantastic shapes and their bark colored in patterns of infinite variety, are among the world's most photogenic trees. To have found a new generation of them establishing, and that in the midst of a six months drought, was a very thought-provoking experience.



OLD BE-AL AT WYPERFELD
An ancient Red Gum

'photo Trevor Pescott

RESERVES WITH A DIFFERENCE

By Jack Wheeler

During a recent visit to Coleraine, where I viewed the total eclipse from the Points, immediately south of the town, I took the opportunity of inspecting the progress of reforestation being carried out on the Points by the Wannan Conservation Society.

I went to school at Coleraine over fifty years ago and the school in those days was situated just below the Points and it was frequently visited by us boys during recess periods, and as long as I can remember the Points were unattractive, bare gravelly ridges which carried grasses in the spring for the town's cows, and during the summer and autumn became bare and desolate. Today this is all changed, thanks to a few conservation minded folk who have banded together and formed the Wannan Conservation Society whose members come from several districts and not only Coleraine itself.

Plantings have been going on now for four years, when the local council agreed to fence in some 10 hectares to exclude stock. It was found that the area fenced off contained four different soil types, from gravelly areas, to loam areas, and so plantings took place according to soil suitability, and the result has been almost astounding.

The exclusion of stock has brought back such natives as Running Postman and Bent Goodenias in abundance. The main plantings have been of eucalypts and are mostly planted in groups of four to five of particular species, and I was very surprised to see Mountain Ash growing in a most flourishing manner to heights of 8 to 10 metres.

Already some 200 eucalypt species have been propagated for planting, and there are special areas set aside for Acacias, Grevilleas, Melaleukas, Banksias etc.

Most of the propagation is carried out by Peter Francis, an old school mate of mine, and his assistants. In the mean time Peter is combing Australia for eucalypt seed of some of our rarer varieties and it is planned to have at this location at Coleraine, the greatest collection of established eucalypts in Australia.

RESERVES WITH A DIFFERENCE (continued)Kaweka Nature Reserve

Visiting Castlemaine recently, to be guest speaker at the newly formed Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club, Mrs. Wheeler and I were overnight guests with Mr. & Mrs. Frank Blake. Frank Blake is tied up with the Committee of Management of a small 2 hectare (5 acres) very close to his residence, so one could say he is the watch dog, and what an amount of work he has done there in his spare time.

The area was in an unwanted state for many years, and as no one appeared interested in the area, it was thought it would be ideal for subdivision for housing, particularly because of its closeness to the town itself, and being undulating, gave reasonable views.

When plans of this nature were announced, locals soon voiced their opinions, and so it became a Crown Land Nature Reserve.

The area is typically gold bearing type land with plenty of gravelly and rocky surfaces, and how plants do survive and flourish there is rather surprising. I found an abundant growth of Daphne Heath (Baeckea ramosissima), and also the Fairy Wax-flower (Eriostemon verrucosus). Also in flower was the common Fringe-myrtle (Calytrix tetragona), Scarlet Mint-bush (Prostanthera aspalathoides) and beautiful purple Westringia drassifolia. All plants are not local, but some introduced varieties will be introduced from time to time. One Diuris orchid was flowering and was thought to be the Tiger Diuris. During the winter, several greenhoods may be found. Walking tracks are provided and the best I found was the Tong-way Walk, rich in colour with everlastings, rice flowers, chocolate lilies at every turn, plus a host of others.

I was also surprised to see that reticulated water is available in the form of several sprays, and two sets of water for birds to drink and bathe, and what an asset this is in any Reserve.

The Reserve has two imposing entrances of heavy carved out timber, and security donation boxes, themselves very well thought out.

And the name of 'Kaweka' is of New Zealand origin being part of a property known as Kaweka, and its meaning I have yet to find out.

Do visit both these new Reserves when in the district - you will be well rewarded.

HOUSE FLY PARASITE

by H. B. Pescott

Reading Nature Notes "By Field and Lane" (Geelong Advertiser 10 June 1976) reminded me of an experience when in Ballarat approximately 40 years ago. When sewerage works were on their early stages we moved to Ballarat and I was engaged by The Authority to prepare House Connection Contract. The office was an old building of brick, hard-plaster lined and papered; it was a converted house of about four rooms. While preparing contracts with papers about I noticed an ordinary house fly land and when frightened off was easily caught. I noticed it had a "tick" (for want of a better word) securely fastened to its leg. On closer inspection I noticed this "tick" had a crab-like claw fastened around the fly's leg. Things did not look too clean but nothing was done about it.

How does this insect compare with the Bird "Louse Fly" mentioned in your article or does it not?

THE VICTORIAN NATURALIST AUTHOR INDEX.

1884 to 1975

Compiled by James A. Baines with Addendum 1976 is now available from Hon. Treasurer, F.N.C.V., 129 Waverley Road, East Malvern 3145. Price \$11 nett (plus postage if applicable) 368 pages.

Published since 1884 by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, "The Victorian Naturalist" was for many years probably the most important journal devoted to natural history in Victoria and is still an important vehicle in this field for both professional researchers and amateurs interested in all aspects of Victoria's botany, geology, zoology etc. The publication of the author index will be welcomed by all those interested in these subjects and should be a valuable tool for all libraries and individuals with any such interest, and indispensable for subscribers to the Victorian Naturalist.

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EDITOR'S NOTE : The following is the 20th. in this series by Mr. W. Roy Wheeler, M.B.E.

Listed above are the counts as published in 'Geelong Naturalist'.

(T.W.P.)

AN HOUR COUNT No. 20

Mallacoota, Victoria

By Roy Wheeler

Little was known of Mallacoota in far Eastern Victoria until the 1950's when it started to become a fishing and tourist attraction. The earliest visitors to the district goes back to 1842. In 1872 a hotel was built at "Lakeside" and a township was planned for the area, across the Inlet from the present site. The Spotted Dog Mine produced gold from 1894-97 and was not far from the hotel. An old cemetery is also in that area and all are now part of the Mallacoota Inlet National Park, one of the most popular tourist areas within Victoria. In 1909 the area was temporarily reserved as a National Park but did not come under the National Parks Act until 1958. The road from Genoa to Mallacoota was not constructed until 1914, for years it remained a bush track but now is bitumen all the way. When you first come on Mallacoota the view is rather breath-taking. You look across at the ocean, then the Entrance, then the Inlet with its islands and lovely lakes with a backdrop of the Howe Range and Gabo Island Lighthouse in the distance. Mallacoota has the lot, rugged coastal scenery, vast areas of bush-land, lakes and rivers and the tourist is well catered for. Numerous picnic grounds, bush walks, caravan parks and camping areas and above all excellent fishing.

Mallacoota was part of Victoria's early ornithological history when Miss Dorrion who lived at the old hotel sent to the National Museum in Melbourne specimens of the Red-crowned Pigeon, the Topknot Pigeon and the Koel the first time they had been recorded in Victoria. In "The Emu" Volume 17, page 107 is the story behind these birds. Only recently August 24, 1976 another new bird for Victoria was reported at Mallacoota the Brown Pigeon. The first Mangrove Heron for Victoria was reported at Mallacoota in the late 1960's. The bird list for Mallacoota is 240 species and most of these are recorded in Mr. Len Robinson's booklet "Birds of the Mallacoota Area Victoria". He starts his book by saying this "Where peace and beauty reign supreme, the nearest place to an earthly paradise". The Bird Observers Club visited the area in November 1962 and Mrs. Wheeler and I together with my brother Jack and his wife were amongst the party. We went with Mr. Len Robinson



WHITE IBIS FLY IN

'photo Trevor Pescott

February
1977

93.

AN HOUR COUNT (continued)

again in May and June 1976. Mallacoota has grown considerably since then but its charm will always be there. We recorded 110 species in the week we were there and included such birds as the Ground Parrot, Reef Heron, Brown Warbler, Spotted Quail-thrush, Beautiful Firetail, King Parrot and Satin Bowerbirds.

On a pleasant early June morning I sat at a picnic table on the foreshore Camping Reserve and had a view over the Entrance and the Inlet and did an hour count, every bird seen or heard within binocular range. Just sit quietly in the one spot for an hour, try it some time.

Mallacoota, Victoria June 3, 1976. From foreshore camping reserve overlooking the Entrance, lake and township. Fine and sunny with a cool south breeze. 8.30a.m. to 9.30a.m. Birds in order of sighting.

Silver Gull, 130; Rainbow Lorikeet, 13; Little Pied Cormorant, 9; Australian Gannet, 42; Bar-tailed Godwit, 12; House Sparrow, 9; Yellow-faced Honeyeater, 1; Magpie Lark, 4; Royal Spoonbill, 10; Black Cormorant, 3; Pied Currawong, 12; Eastern Curlew, 9; Spurwinged Plover, 4; Pied Oystercatcher, 2; White-faced Heron, 7; Laughing Kookaburra, 1; Goldfinch, 10; Welcome Swallow, 4; Jacky Winter, 1; Starling, 9; Crested Tern, 42; White Ibis, 2; Pacific Gull, 3; White-capped Albatross, 1; Red Wattlebird, 28; Eastern Spinebill, 1; White-backed Magpie, 4; White-breasted Sea-eagle, 1; Raven, 1; Little Wattlebird, 1; Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, 3.

Total 31 species and 379 individuals.

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RECOVERY OF A BANDED BLACK CORMORANT

by Ira Savage

On the evening of the 2 December 1976, a resident of Harrison Court, Highton, Geelong, notified me by telephone that a large blackish bird was sitting under one of his native shrubs in the front garden. Would I be interested in identifying it for him?

The bird had a band on one leg, and this would be of interest to the C.S.I.R.O. Wildlife Research at Canberra.

On my arrival at the Harrison Court residence a large hand fishing net was made available, the bird coaxed into the centre of the lawn and netted.

I identified it as an immature Black Cormorant (Phalacrocorax casbo). It appeared healthy but exhausted.

My son Ian and I recorded the band number and the same day forwarded it to Canberra by letter. Mr. David Purchase of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme supplied the following information in reply :

Banded at Lake Menindee N.S.W. by N.J. Favalore. Lat. 32" 20" S.
long. 142" 20" E.

Date 19 September 1976. Band No. 131-31670.

Arrive at Harrison Court, Highton, Geelong 2-12-76. Lat. 38" 08" S.
long. 144" 21" E.

Travelled 827 km SSE.

This bird was released at Balyang Sanctuary that same evening by my son Ian.

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IDENTIFICATION OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIAN WILDFLOWERS

by James A. Baines

Many more people, in these days of greater mobility and better roads are travelling to far places beyond the borders of their home State and as this certainly includes members of the Geelong Field Naturalists Club it is important that they take with them on their journeys books that will assist them to identify the many species of plants that will be unfamiliar to them.

We are fortunate in Victoria in having very many well-illustrated reference books that supplement the reliable, comprehensive 'Handbook to Plants in Victoria', Books 1 and 2, by Dr. J.H. Willis, particularly the first of the Reed series on 'Australian Flora in Colour': 'Flowers and Plants of Victoria'. For Western Australia (1973) and New South Wales and Southern Queensland (1975) similarly lavish books have continued that series, while Black's 'Flora of South Australia' (4 volumes plus Eichler's Supplement) and Dr. Winifred Curtis's 'Student's Flora of Tasmania' are the basic references for those two States.

I understand that a volume on the northern tropical flora is being prepared as a continuation of the excellent Reed series, but this will not be available for a considerable time. In the meantime, those who travel to Central Australia, to the 'Top End' of the Northern Territory, to the Kimberleys, etc. in the tropical north of Western Australia, or to North Queensland, should try to get as many of the following titles that I have been able to acquire and have found most useful.

'Wildflowers of Central Australia', by Thelma M. Chippendale, published in 1968 by Jacaranda Press. This little book reproduces colour photographs of 50 species of C.A. plants, with a useful summary of data about the plant opposite each picture. This is only a tiny sampling of the 1100 species recorded for the area, but they are all likely to be met with including 5 species of Eremophila (Emu Bushes).

IDENTIFICATION OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIAN WILDFLOWERS (continued)

- 'Wildflowers of the North and Centre', by Michael and Irene Morcombe, one of the Periwinkle Colour Series, published in 1970. This illustrates 83 species (56 from the Centre, and 27 from the North), including 7 of Eremophila, all different except one (E. latrobei) from those in the book above.
- 'Wildflowers of the Outback', by Densey Clyne, published by Rigby's (Adelaide) in 1973. This book has a larger page format, and also is limited to 50 species, but many are full-page studies, and show much floral detail. It is similar in appearance to 'Wildflowers of Victoria', by Ken and Esther Stepnell, in the same series.
- 'North Australian Plants, Part 1 - Top End Wildflowers', by Jenny Harmer, published by the Society for Growing Australian Plants, with the assistance of the Stanley Smith Memorial Publication Fund in 1975. The author is a Darwin botanist with first-hand knowledge of the plants of the Northern Territory. This deals with 372 species, of which 150 are illustrated in colour and described at greater length. Nine of the plates are devoted to the wattles, of which 55 species (Acacia) are listed. Of the eucalypts, 37 species are mentioned, of Crotalaria 14, of Ficus 12, of Hibiscus 17, Grevillea 12, Melaleuca 12, and 21 species of Utricularia (Bladderworts)!
- 'Around Mount Isa: A Guide to the Flora and Fauna', by Helen Horton, published by University of Queensland Press in 1976. After an introductory chapter on the Kalkadoon tribe of Aborigines and the geology of the region, there are chapters devoted to the plants, the birds, the reptiles, and the mammals (that on reptiles being by David Stammer). The book is illustrated by line drawings, black and white photographs, and colour plates. Of the botanical species, 62 are illustrated in colour.
- 'Australian Plants', Vol. 7, No. 58, March 1974, a special issue entirely devoted to 'Wildflowers of Central Australia', with 19 colour plates.
- Ditto, Vol. 8, No. 62, March 1975, and No. 63, June 1975, two issues on the wildflowers of tropical Queensland, with a total of 49 plates.

IDENTIFICATION OF NORTHERN AUSTRALIAN WILDFLOWERS (continued)

Ditto, Vol. 8, No. 68, September 1976, an issue devoted to Cassias and other tropical Caesalpinaceae.

'A Card Key to the Rain Forest Trees of North Queensland', by B.P.M. Hyland (Forests Office, Atherton), 1971.

'The Mountain Mallee Heath of the McPherson Ranges', by Richard Jones (Dept. of Botany, University of Queensland), 1964.

In addition, 'Wildflowers of the Warm East Coast', by Vera Scarth-Johnson, in the Jacaranda series (1967), deals with the flowers of S.E. Queensland, as does 'Wildflowers of the East Coast', by the Morecombes, in the Periwinkle Colour Series; both of which being useful also for the sub-tropical North Coast of New South Wales.

For the trees of the tropical scrubs or 'jungles', an excellent reference book is 'Australian Rain-forest Trees', by the late W.D. Francis, Government Botanist of Queensland 1950-54, who published the first edition in 1929; the second (revised) edition in 1951; while an up-dated 3rd edition (with nomenclatural changes effected by G.M. Chippendale) came out in 1970.

Other books on the northern floras are out of print, and rarely become available secondhand, and then only at a prohibitive price, such as F.M. Bailey's 'Flora of Queensland' (7 volumes), A.J. Ewart's 'Flora of the Northern Territory', and a small, incomplete work on the Kimberley flora. 'Plant Communities of Cape York Peninsula', by L. Pedley, of Qld. Herbarium, Brisbane, and R.F. Isbell, CSIRO, Townsville, covers that remote area very well, and is very interesting for the many links with the floras of New Guinea and Indo-Malaysia. D.E. Boyland, of Queensland Herbarium, dealt with the plants found in Simpson Desert National Park, in 'Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland, Volume 82 (1971).

BIRD WATCHING AT STEIGLITZ

By Ina McIntyre

In November and December last year, following the late spring, Steiglitz was a perfect spot for bird-watching. On each visit the whole area was noisy with bird song, from up near the Court House where Rufous Whistlers made the main contribution to the volume of sound, down to the creek where White-winged Trillers joined in to make the chorus deafening.

There were nests too - a Yellow-tailed Thornbills' unusual 2-tiered nest in a pepper-tree by the road, a White-winged Trillers' nest well hidden in a sapling by the creek and another nearby in a high clump of mistletoe, a wood-swallow's flimsy nest in a new growth at the broken top of a small sapling, a tiny Jacky Winters' nest in the forked dry branch of a tree near the path, a dainty little nest suspended near the trunk of a sapling with two little White-naped Honeyeaters in attendance, a Hooded Robin's neat little cup-shaped nest visited constantly, as they all were, but in that case only by the female.

Most of the nests found were in one small area by the creek, and here too were baby Hooded Robins on the ground, well camouflaged by their speckled plumage, hopping up occasionally onto a fallen branch, while adult robins kept watch nearby. Here were little flocks of Red-browed Finches too, and occasionally one or two Diamond Firetails briefly seen. There were Blue Wrens in the bracken by the creek, and Crimson and Eastern Rosellas sometimes flew overhead, while a Grey Thrush often sang from the branch of a tall tree and Fan-tailed and Pallid Cuckoos called from a little distance.

Further downstream was a pool in a big bend of the creek, with an overhanging tree where a big White-eared Honeyeater liked to come, and thick bracken and low bushes where Yellow-winged, Yellow-faced and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, also Goldfinches, darted in and out. There was even a Koala with a baby, sleeping comfortably in a tall tree.

BIRD-WATCHING AT STEIGLITZ (continued)

Birds seen only once included a Spotted and a Striated Pardalote, a White-browed Scrub-wren, an Orange-winged Sitella, a Brown Thornbill, a Grey Fantail, a White-throated Tree-creeper, a Scissors-grinder, a Kookaburra, and an Olive-backed Oriole, located by his call. Yellow Robins were seen occasionally.

At the cemetery a little distance away, the bush close to the mown area was home to a great variety of birds, including White-plumed Honeyeaters, and once a good view was had of a Horsfield Bronze-cuckoo moving about on the grass.

Two final notes may be of interest to members -

Early in the new year a flock of Speckled Warblers was seen hunting noisily for food on the ground in the Bannockburn forest, and a Brown Goshawk there had his hunting continually interrupted by the shrill warning cries of smaller birds.

About the same time a juvenile Nankeen Night Heron was seen standing perfectly still by the river in Queen's Park, his speckled immature plumage blending perfectly with the large stones and rocks around him.

PLAIN WANDERER AT INVERLEIGH

By Trevor Pescott

On 25 November 1976, Mr. W. McWilliam of North Geelong contacted me with a request to identify a ground-dwelling bird caught by a dog at Inverleigh.

Close examination showed it to be a Plain Wanderer - an immature bird with a pale beak base and complete absence of the checkered collar on which is based its scientific name.

Although not proven, it seems likely that it was a young bird recently raised in the district.

A BIRD INDEED

By Lionel Welsh

St. Francis of Assisi wrote this description of a bird

"My brother birds, you should praise your Creator very much and always love Him. He gave feathers to clothe you, wings so that you can fly, and whatever else was necessary for you. God made you noble among His creatures, and He gave you a home in the purity of the air, though you neither sow nor reap. He nevertheless protects and governs you without any solicitude on your part."

Likely enough St. Francis would have had in his mind those glorious larks which sing and soar in their blue Umbrian skies, and would be so well known to him. But on the first day of March, 1974, an Australian bird appeared in our garden which surely would have delighted the saint. It alighted in our crab apple tree for a brief time. This was the first time to my knowledge during our sixty seven year occupancy of our house that this species had come into our garden.

I drew my sister's Doll's attention to the rare visitor. She was busy watering our neighbour's (Mrs. Trevenen) garden who was away holidaying, and she had a close-up view for some minutes. It was an Eastern Shrike Tit, a male bird and it seemed to be unaccompanied by a mate. The time was between 3.30 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon of a hot sultry day in the 30's Celsius.

Previous sightings of this bird had been in the Enfield forest when several shrike tits were seen in the company of White-eared Honey-eaters. What richness of color with the olive green of the honey-eaters contrasting with the canary yellow of the shrike tits. And the latter birds so regal with their characteristic crests! Truly God has made you noble among His creatures.

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GEELONG BIRDOS ABROAD

by Jess and Arthur Collins

Members of the Geelong Field Naturalists Club might be interested to hear of the experiences of two Geelong "birdos" in Southern England. Soon after we arrived in September we were lucky enough to get a house in a country village ten miles from Reading and five from the nearest main road. The village is surrounded by woods and fields, and our house backs on to mixed broad-leaf and conifer woodland to which we have direct access. The interface between woods and garden attracts many birds, in fact we can see more here in five minutes than in an hour's walk through the woods. The house with its large rear windows makes an excellent hide, and binoculars are a necessity at the breakfast table, when the birds are most active.

We have rigged a bird-table which attracts Blue and Great Tits throughout the day, sometimes by the dozen. Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Dunnock, Blackbird, Robin and Jackdaw also visit the table, while wrens skulk in low bushes nearby. House Sparrows and Starlings are also present, but not so much in evidence as in our garden at home, while Goldfinch and Bullfinch are infrequent visitors. The tall oaks which line the rear boundary attract the larger birds such as Rook, Woodpigeon, Magpie, Jay, Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, and also the shy of the smaller birds, including Long-tailed and Coal Tits, Nuthatch and Tree-creeper. The understorey of holly and rowan has borne a bountiful crop of red berries which are a food supply for Song-thrush, Missel Thrush and Redwing. So we can do a lot of bird-watching without leaving the house, in fact we have watched a woodpecker chipping away at a dead branch while sitting up in bed for an early morning cup of tea. Another pleasure is to watch the grey squirrels chasing each other through the bare branches and leaping from tree to tree.

When we were first here, pheasants were very common on the verges of the lanes and minor roads, with Common and Red-legged Partridges on the ploughed fields. Since the shooting season started they have been scarce, the reason being seen in the Reading poultry

GEELONG BIRDOS ABROAD (continued).

shops where hanging bunches of game birds cover the ceilings. The open farmlands attract large flocks of the Lapwings and Black-headed Gulls, together with Rooks and Jackdaws. Two or three miles away in the Kennet Valley are some large flooded gravel pits which harbour flocks of waterfowl including Coot and Great Crested Grebe (the same species as at home), Moorhen, Mute Swan, Mallard, Tufted Duck and Shoveller. However, the last time we visited the area the lakes were frozen and the birds had departed for open water elsewhere.

We have joined the Reading Ornithological Club and have attended several meetings with excellent speakers and also gone on some field trips. One of the most rewarding was to Langstone Harbour near Portsmouth, specifically to see the Brent Geese which winter there in hundreds. Besides these, the coastal marshes produced many waders such as Ruff, Dunlin, Little Stint, Knot, Turnstone, Redshank, Black-tailed Godwit and Grey and Ringed Plovers, while swimming offshore were Black-necked and Little Grebes, Shelduck and Golden-eye. Earlier we had been on our own to Selsey Bill, where we saw some of the last southward-migrating Wheatears, also Stonechats and Yellow Hammers, and Bar-tailed Godwits on the swamps. At Pagham Harbour in the same area we were charmed by a family of Great Tits which perched on the widescreen wipers and tapped on the glass for a handout which was duly forthcoming.

One of our early trips was a pilgrimage to Selborne, which does not seem to have changed much since Gilbert White wrote his classic. The old yew still stands in the churchyard where he is buried, and a stained glass window commemorating him includes all the birds and animals mentioned in the 'Natural History of Selborne'. We trod the zig-zag path which he and his brother built up through the Beech Hanger and walked in the rain on Selborne Common, then glowing with autumn colours. There is an excellent small museum in his old house 'The Wakes' which was well worth the visit.

Another rewarding trip was to Peter Scott's Severn Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge. The wildfowl collection from all parts of the world was interesting, but to us the best part was watching from a hide the wild birds which gather on the lake in front of Scott's house to be fed every evening. We saw a small flock of Bewick's Swans flying in, which may have come direct from their breeding grounds in Siberia.

GEELONG BIRDOS ABROAD (continued)

All this birding is in addition to visit to ancient cathedrals, parish churches, castles and little thatched-roof villages tucked away in valleys on back roads. At present we are somewhat weather-bound, as icy roads and snowfalls make long trips inadvisable. However, there is plenty of interest in our own area - Watership Down, the locality of the rabbit story, is only a few miles away, and the old Roman walls of Silchester are nearer still. Having the definite objective of seeing as many British birds as we can is adding greatly to the interest of our trip, and bringing us into contact with local birdos who have been most helpful in directing us to good birdwatching areas. Our 'Life List' is up 92 species and we hope for many more when the spring migrants start to arrive.

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BOLETUS RECIPES

By Trevor Pescott

A large specimen of Edible Boletus fungus on display at Angair's Nature Show in September drew considerable interest; amongst the comments were a range of recipes to render the large toadstool palatable.

One visitor suggested it should be boiled, then pickled in vinegar; another recommended a light boiling, then fry with bacon and serve with sour cream.

Yet another recipe was slice it and fry in egg and bread crumbs, whilst a fourth was to fry, then dry and crumble into soup; finally, it could be used as a salad vegetable after being boiled and sliced.

Unfortunately while I pondered these, unable to decide which to use, the fungus putrified into a soggy mass and had to be discarded, and I was relieved of the need to make a final choice!

BARWON RIVER OBSERVATIONS

By Theo Trickett

It has been interesting to observe the increasing diversity and numbers of birdlife at the Fyans Park section of the Barwon River since late 1973/early 1974 and up to the time of writing (29 February 1976). Half an hour at approximately the same time once a week has been the observation time. A complete summary of numbers of birds noted would perhaps not be of great interest; but a list of species is given.

On River or Banks

Silver Gull	Brown Bittern (once, late 1974)
Dusky Moorhen (68 on 10/8/75)	Pelican (40 on 14/11/73)
Eastern Swamphen	Chestnut Teal
Black Swan	Little Pied Cormorant
Little Grebe	White Egret
Spur-winged Plover	Mallard
Coot	Little Black Cormorant
Black Cormorant	Grey Teal
Reed Warbler (returned on 21/9/74)	Yellow-billed Spoonbill
(" " 13/9/75)	Musk Duck (male)
Black Duck	White-necked Heron
Pied Cormorant	Straw-necked Ibis (19 on 16/11/75
White-faced Heron (9 on 6/4/75)	overhead : 21 on 20/11/75)
(5 on 25/1/76)	White Ibis (overhead)

Overhead or in Trees of Park

Welcome Swallow	Red Wattle-bird
Magpie Lark	Goldfinch
White-backed Magpie	White-plumed Honeyeater
Raven	Willie Wagtail
Crimson Rosella	Skylark
Nankeen Kestrel	Sparrow
Kookaburra	Galah
Starling	Rock Dove



BLACK CORMORANTS AT BALYANG SANCTUARY
'photo Trevor Pescott

BARWON RIVER OBSERVATIONS (continued)

Blackbird	Pallid Cuckoo
Fairy Martin	Purple-crowned Lorikeet
Nankeen Night-heron	Yellow-winged Honeyeater
Indian Miner (1 - Aug. 74, Jan 75)	
Silvereye	Grey Butcherbird
Brown Hawk	Rainbow Lorikeet
Red-rumped Parrot	White-naped Honeyeater
Black-shouldered Kite	Little Grassbird

Some interesting encounters of birds have also been observed, such as a flight pattern of Welcome Swallows harried by a hawk (24/3/74), or the harrying of a rabbit by four Nankeen Kestrels (Feb. 76), or the White-backed Magpie, briefly joined by an indignant White-plumed Honeyeater, both chasing a raven, (Jun. 75).

A congregation of 52 Welcome Swallows was noticed on 23/3/75, perhaps late March is time to migrate for those who do go off. There has been a remarkable dearth of these birds this summer at this section of the River.

The first observation of the White-faced Heron is on 21/4/74, and since then it is rare not to see one or more around. A favourite resting spot is on top of one of the concrete pylons.

A dead tree on the western bank of the river was a favoured spot for cormorants to dry off; this tree was unfortunately cut down when the track that side was made.

The great numbers of Silver Gulls dropped after the Fyans Park tip was closed, and it is now seldom one sees one.

And finally it is interesting to note that many birds appear to use the river as a navigation aid: the curve of the river at Fyans Park is perhaps a checkpoint as flights of swan ibis, pelican, duck etc., cross over at some height to soar over the hills of the western side of the River.

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ECLIPSE DAY OBSERVATIONS

Belmont Common Swamp

by Ira Savage

Time

- 15.55 Looking over Swamp and Golf Course N.W. direction. Good waters in the swamp, a little above average. This swamp is the one which is under the care of the G.F.N.C. east of the Golf Course Road. Sky very cloudy, sun trying to break through; wind appears S.W. Bird life on the swamp and golf course looks quite busy and normal with the following birds in sight : White Egret (3), many Eastern Swampens, Black Duck, Grey Teal, Welcome Swallow, Silver Gull, Skylark, Tailor-bird, Starling, Raven, many Spur-winged Plovers, Pallid Cuckoo (calling), Dusky Moorhen, Reed Warblers (singing), Mudlark.
- 16.15 Noticed it getting very dull, still very cloudy. The gulls, ravens and egrets which have been normally flying around the swamp have disappeared from the air, but swallows are still flying. The slightly warm breeze feels cooler.
- White-fronted Chat pecking off the ground looks unusually restive and has climbed to the top of a small plant growing on a rise in the ground. This action increased as it grew darker making the action look comical. Skylark has dropped down to ground level.
- 16.25 Skylarks still whistling in the sky, Reed Warbler whistling and Tailor-bird. Daylight disappearing by this special occasion. Swamp frogs appear to be croaking more often than a short while ago. Definitely getting cooler. Black Duck (7) took off heading N.E.
- 16.33 Frog croaking more frequently. Silver Gulls still feeding, occasional one flying. Black Duck reappeared from the N.E. landed in the water. All swallows are much lower now, just above the water. Bird life has gone very quiet, Skylarks stopped their singing and aerial flying. Tailor-bird and Reed Warbler stopped whistling.

ECLIPSE DAY OBSERVATIONS (continued)

- 16.36 Street lights are on. Sun penetrating cloud and casting on my writing pad for the first time. Getting dark very quickly. It feels very strange, the atmosphere feels quite wierd. Lots of Silver Gulls taking off and heading easterly. Very hard to write in this light, a torch put into use. Light now going very, very quickly, S.W. sky looking black.
- 16.40 Still light in the sky in the N.W. area and north. Occasional call of gull and Eastern Swamphen. Light quickly reappearing around the sun like a giant halo making the occasion very startling.
- 16.42 Gulls are in full chorus followed by Spur-winged Plovers and Starlings. A definite silencing of wildlife during brief darkness. Reed Warblers whistling once again, occasional croaking of the swamp frogs (3) large birds in flight.
- 16.47 Vee formation of large birds of 40 heading N.E. at about 1,000 ft. (6) more formations of what appear to be White and Straw-necked Ibis heading in the above direction at about the same height (approx. 300 birds). Poor light and distance making accuracy of species very difficult. It is almost back to normal light, the occasional frog croaking.
- 16.51
- 16.52 Skylarks singing, Ravens feeding, and still another Vee formation of large birds heading in an easterly direction, species unknown. Still cloudy, no sunshine, wind dropped to almost nil; still feels a little chilly. Only swallows fly very low over the swamp.
- 16.55
- 16.59 All birds appear, back at normal feeding.
Time-piece checked by the telephone clock at the P.O. Geelong.
- 18.45 P.S. Monday evening 25/10/76, these same vee formations of birds appeared at this time flying more leisurely, in fact very slowly, from the N.W. to the S.E. and definitely identified as Straw-necked and White Ibis; very clear sky indeed.
These observations all at the same point at the Belmont Common Swamp.

OTWAYS CAMP, Elliot Road

by Glenn McCarthy

The camp was held on the Elliot Road over the weekend 27-28 November 1976.

Following is the list of birds seen -

Albatross (sp?) offshore	Grey Shrike-thrush
Black Cormorant	Striated Thornbill
Australian Gannet	Brown Thornbill (nesting)
Silver Gull	Yellow-tailed Thornbill
Pacific Gull	White-browed Scrub-wren (nesting)
White-faced Heron	Rufous Bristlebird
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Superb Blue Wren
Boobook Owl	White-throated Tree-creeper
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Striated Pardalote
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Grey-backed Silvereye (nesting)
King Parrot	White-naped Honeyeater (nesting)
Crimson Rosella	Brown-headed Honeyeater
Kookaburra	Eastern Spinebill
Fantailed Cuckoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Golden Bronze-cuckoo	White-eared Honeyeater (nesting)
Grey Fantail (nesting)	Crescent Honeyeater (nesting)
Rufous Fantail	Yellow-winged Honeyeater
Satin Flycatcher	Red Wattle-bird
Rose Robin	Red-browed Finch
Yellow Robin (nesting)	Blackbird
Golden Whistler	Grey Currawong
Rufous Whistler	Raven (sp?)

Mammals recorded were -

Black Wallaby, Bush Rat, Brown Phascogale, Yellow-bellied (Fluffy) Glider (at least three groups), and Tiger Cat (one badly injured on roadside, later died).

JUNIOR PAGES

Here are the meanings of some words you will come across in Nature Study. Try to learn them, and see if you can find in this list the things that fit into each group. There are at least two in each group and some may fit into more than one group; for example, a Sheep is Herbivorous and also Cloven-footed.

Evergreen	Tree that has green leaves all the year.
Deciduous	One that sheds its leaves annually.
Carnivorous	Flesh-eating.
Insectivorous	Insect-eating.
Herbivorous	Grass-eating.
Marsupial	Having a pouch.
Nocturnal	Active at night.
Monotreme	Having only one opening.
Ruminant	Chewing the cud.
Cloven-footed	With hoof divided into two parts.
Oviparous	Laying eggs (refers to reptiles).
Viviparous	Giving birth to young without laying eggs (refers to reptiles).
Web-footed	Having toes joined together with a membrane.
Tap-rooted	Having one main thick root
Amphibian	Living in water and on land.
Venomous	Poisonous.

Choose from this list:

Duck	Wedgetail eagle	Kangaroo	Echidna
Carrot	Parsnip	Koala	Wagtail
Tiger snake	Wattle tree	Owl	Frog.
Cat	Swallow	Platypus	
Swan	Cape Barren Goose	Cow	
Lion	Possum	Water rat	
Penguin	Swift	Magpie	
Fruit tree	Pig	Goat	
Seal	Willow tree	Copperhead snake	
Gum tree	Sheep	Deer	



A BUSH RAT ENJOYS A WASH

'photo Trevor Pescott

A LAST WORD**By Trevor Pescott**

A new year. . . 1977. What will it bring us in the world of wild-life and conservation?

There can be no doubt that we will be faced with an interesting, a challenging year. . . for when do we not face such a future? But we must be prepared to work harder than we have in the past, for our problems are not reduced with the turn of a calendar page - rather they are mirrored, reflected, enlarged and increased.

We have already to face the Limeburners (Corio) Lagoon marina project, an \$18 million project; the sewerage purification work at Little River is of concern, as is the outcome of the L.C.C. Corangamite recommendations.

Add to this the increased pressures on Ocean Grove Reserve, the You Yangs, Belmont Common, Mt. Duneed, Buckley Falls, the proliferation of pines in the Otways, the reduction in value of the Connewarre Lakes. . . or is there a reduction in value here?

Just what do we know of this wonderful wetland area? We have been told of ibis and spoonbill colonies, but we suspect more than this; a survey which we may well undertake may reveal Brown Bitterns nesting there, and other species of waterbird too.

The Botany Group will no doubt continue its extremely valuable work in the Brisbane Ranges and elsewhere; but more documentation of other natural history subjects is urgently needed.

We effectively unite work and pleasure in these studies, and this is one of the joys of being involved in the Club's activities.

TREVOR PESCOTT,
Honorary Editor.

COMING EVENTS

- February 1 General Meeting. Northern Territory.
 Miss F. Poole and Mr. G. McCarthy.
 Juniors : Wildlife Photography.
- 13 Excursion (late night return). Moonlight Head
 and Muttonbird Island. Leader Mr. G. Mathison.
- 22 Committee Meeting - Mr. R. Baldwin.
- March 1 General Meeting. Naturalist overseas.
 Mr. I. Woodland.
 Juniors : Care of Injured Creatures.
- 12-14 (Long weekend) Camp-out to be arranged.
- 20 Excursion. Piggoreet area. Leader Mr. J. Wheeler.
- 29 Committee Meeting - Mr. G. McCarthy.
- April 5 Annual Meeting. Members' Night.
 Juniors : Specimen Night - Prizes.
- 17 Excursion. Blackwood. Leader Mr. R. Baldwin.
- 23-25 (Long weekend) Port Fairy, bird banding.
- 26 Committee meeting.

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NOTE - The new year's syllabus will be incorporated in
the next "Geelong Naturalist" - Volume 14, No. 1.,
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The Statements and opinions contained in the papers published in this Journal are the responsibility of respective authors.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the G.F.N.C. is open to any person interested in Natural History. The 'Geelong Naturalist' is distributed free to all members, and the Club's reference and lending library is available.

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MT. BAW BAW · OUR FOURTH VISIT

By Ted Errey

Each January the interests of club members are divided between bird observing on Mud Islands and general studies in some mountain area. The previous two summer camps were at Mt. Cole, near Beaufort. Before that, three visits had been made to Mt. Baw Baw. For the Australia Day weekend this year, January 28-31, alpine enthusiasts paid another visit to the Baw Baw ski lodge.

Two other groups were also at the village for the weekend. We were delighted to be able to share our daytime excursions and the evening get-togethers with our confederates from the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club and with members of the Field Study Group of the Youth Hostels Association. The lounge was crowded with about 120 people packed in on the two evenings for slide viewing and general conferring.

Collaboration with other clubs in the field is always a pleasant and beneficial exercise. It was specially so on this occasion, as the Latrobe Valley contingent included such experienced naturalists as Miss Jean Galbraith, Miss Laura White and Mr. Alan Morrison.

The help of Ski Club official Paul Chaplin during our stay was greatly appreciated. He led us on our cross-country excursions, and his knowledge of and enthusiasm for the Baw Baw area added much to our enjoyment of the weekend.

As the Geelong party was not large enough to occupy the whole lodge - only sixteen being present - our numbers were augmented by several Latrobe Valley members, who, as overflow from their lodges, made a welcome addition to our company.

Saturday morning was taken up with a walk to the summit of the mount via Shirley's Slide, returning via the Painted Run. This was a very slow procession for there was so much to see, so much that differed from the lowland vegetation we were used to.

MT. BAW BAW (continued)

For Sundews, of course, we expected to bend our backs. But not for Ballarts and Coprosmas. Our Cherry Ballart is a handsome and shapely tree. The Alpine Ballart is a prostrate dwarf, hugging the rock surfaces almost as closely as the lichens and mosses do. The "berries", as with other ballarts, are the swollen stems of the fruits, not the fruits themselves. These "berries" were a bright red, and were common enough to show up clearly for our cameras.

A somewhat similar "fruit" is that of the Mountain Plum Pine, which develops a succulent red receptacle with the seed attached. In exposed positions this tree also grows in espalier style pressing close to the rock surface.

Two coprosmas, Creeping Coprosma and Turquoise Coprosma, were also fruiting freely, the first with orange-red, the second with bluish berries. Both are prostrate plants, with stems rooting readily in the moss and damp soil.

Silver Astelia, or Pineapple Grass, as it is called in Tasmania, growing in dense patches in the bogs, also carried bright red berries. Though all may not have been met on our first excursion, these various fruiting plants provided an outstanding feature of the weekend's botany.

Tadpoles in great numbers populated the many pools of the boggy terrain. In some cases the shallowness of the water threatened their continued existence. The presence of these lively creatures led to a search for their parents, and there were high hopes of finding a Baw Baw frog. As the party didn't seem to include any authority on amphibians the efforts were rather unavailing, at least from a scientific viewpoint. But some frogs were discovered, and our lack of knowledge increased our interest, bringing on the feeling that we could all do a little homework on this particular aspect of natural history, too. We found a fascination in the botany of alpine bogs. The creatures that live in this environment are equally worthy of a close study, and may provide a fascination even greater.

At least one specimen was identified by members and watched with great interest. This was the larva of a caddis-fly, with its hard-shelled front end protruding from a section of hollow rush stem which sheltered the soft hind end. Because it uses



VEINED SUN-ORCHID AT BAW BAW

Photo by Trevor Pescott

MT. BAW BAW (continued)

this protection the animal is often called a water case-moth.

After lunch, all groups met at the Y.H.A. lodge to hear a talk by Gary Squires, one of the Forest Commission members of the committee of management of the Baw Baw Alpine Reserve. There we learnt of the activities of this committee and some of the problems connected with their work. Later we were taken on a tour of inspection and shown where wear and erosion occur on narrow dense-traffic areas. Straw is spread over the affected ground to protect the surface and the new growth of introduced grasses. Seed of these is scattered with fertilizer over the damaged sections. These grasses thrive and hold the surface while the fertilizer lasts, but when the fertility of the soil drops the foreign grasses decline and the native snow grass gradually takes their place. We saw also wider sections of track where the snow grass is able to cope with the less concentrated traffic.

Gary explained, too, the ecological value of the sphagnum bogs. Where unspoilt by fires, grazing or excessive trampling by animals (either two-footed or four) they hold the water in a widely dispersed reservoir, letting it out gradually to the headwaters of the streams draining the plateau. Magnificent views of the ranges to the north, and even a glimpse of the Promontory peaks far to the south added much to this tour where we had botanized in the morning.

No comprehensive bird list was compiled during the weekend, mainly because of the preponderance of botanists in the party. As these characters are renowned for keeping their eyes down, their attention was caught more often by the movements of skinks rather than of birds. However, Flame Robins and Crescent Honeyeaters were both seen feeding their young. Grey Thrushes and Grey Fantails were relatively common, and Red Wattlebirds and other smaller honeyeaters were sighted among the blossom of the Snow Gums. Swifts also were listed, and an occasional Wedge-tail attracted notice soaring effortlessly on updraught currents.

When the club visited Baw Baw in January 1973, the sighting and photographing of Leadbeater's Possums was an exciting highlight. Partly with this in mind, it was decided to do some mammal trapping this year, so that listing of our furred animals could

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MT. BAW BAW (continued)

be done in addition to plants and birds. No startling result ensued, but two Bush Rats and two Dusky Marsupial Mice were caught. These were inspected, photographed and returned to their own territory. The Bush Rats in particular were unperturbed by their temporary imprisonment, and, while being examined ate pieces of lettuce leaves and the remains of the bait. The bait used for this work is a mixture of oatmeal, peanut butter and honey, quite a tasty concoction.

Sunday was probably the main day as far as our activities were concerned, for we spent it in an all-day hike. Clouds of fog as we set out threatened to obscure the view and even dampen us considerably, but they soon cleared to allow us a lovely sunny day, with enough cool breeze to prevent overheating during the climbing, and to ensure that bush flies were not troublesome. March flies, of course, are not deterred by gentle breezes, and these outsize specimens were at times something of a problem.

Paul Chaplin led us on this exercise, of about eight kilometres, taking in Mt. St. Phillack, the highest point of the Baw Baw Plateau, and a section of the Alpine Walking Track which traverses the plateau north-westwards from Mt. Erica. The climb out of Tullicouty Glen to the top of the ridge tested the soundness of wind and limb, but this brief ordeal was soon put out of mind by the magnificent display of Grass Trigger-plants along the track to the peak. This flower, wherever we saw it, was the most eye-catching one for the entire weekend, and the dense patches near Mt. Phillack had cameras working overtime. During more leisurely walks, members admiring the plants had seen several triggers activated by visiting bees.

At the summit there was more photography, to capture evidence - for the records of both the Ski Club and the G.F.N.C. - of the Geelong members who made the journey.

Soon afterwards a short diversion was made to the north-east to view Mustering Flat from a granite outcrop. This name is a reminder of the days not long past when cattle summer-grazed the plateau. It is the trampling of cattle, perhaps more than their grazing, that is so detrimental to alpine environment. Sphagnum moss is destroyed over considerable areas, and

MT. BAW BAW (continued)

especially along cattle pads, leaving the bare soil open to erosion which gullies the slopes, draining off the rain and snow water too rapidly, and silting up the mountain streams.

From that point we took a fairly direct line home, following the snow poles most of the way but diverting along a ski trail to skirt Mt. Baw Baw on the east side and return to the village via Shirley's Slide. On the way we met with groups who had made the day a botany excursion among the bogs and along a tributary of the West Tyers River. The large party had divided after our morning tea stop north of Mt. Baw Baw. Paul did a first class job in returning all groups without any obvious losses, particularly as his experience of the plateau had been gained under winter conditions only, when the covering of snow would give the terrain a vastly different appearance from that of late January.

In concentrating on the more floriferous or more unusual plants there is a tendency to overlook the most obvious, which in this region is of course the Snow Gum. As the only tree of the highest country it is conspicuous enough, but in its own right it is a tree of outstanding character, partly due to its contortions of trunk and limb in such severe conditions of cold and strong winds, partly because of the contrasting colour patterns of the bark at all seasons. These trees and the rugged granite outcrops provide a magnificent setting for the lesser plants, the pools and streams, the birds and other creatures that add movement and music to the scene.

Of the "lesser plants", there were many, apart from the berry-bearers mentioned earlier, and there were even others of that grouping. Mountain Pepper, for example, was widespread, and a few members who were induced to nibble a leaf of this plant agreed on the appropriateness of the name. Taste, smell and touch can all be used to assist sight in the problem of identification. Tasting doesn't necessarily mean swallowing, though apart from certain fungi there is little of a poisonous nature in Victorian flora. In this case the peppery sensation can soon be detected by a tentative nibble, as can the bitter taste of *Daviesias* (Bitter-peas), though we met none of that genus during our stay.

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MT. BAW BAW (continued)

We did find two mint-bushes, Victorian Christmas-bush and Alpine Mint-bush, and with most species of that genus the crumpling of a leaf releases enough essential oil for the sense of smell to identify it. Alpine Mint-bush makes an excellent garden shrub up to a metre high, its large flowers being white or pale mauve with darker markings.

The grey-green foliage of Sky Lilies formed dense patches in some wet areas, the pale blue, almost white waxy-looking flowers making quite a display though they nestled stalkless among the grasslike leaves. Silver Astelia, mentioned among the berry plants, is also a member of the lily family.

It is surprising to find an oxalis as a treasured alpine plant, but Snowdrop Wood-sorrel is not likely to become a pest as so many other species have. It has the typical trifoliolate oxalis leaf, but it has not the bulbs that make "Sourgrass" so troublesome in our gardens. The flower, as the common name suggests, is pure white instead of the more usual yellow or pink. Oxalis has hundreds of species throughout the world but only two are native to Australia. Snowdrop Wood-sorrel is restricted on the mainland to patches in and around the Baw Baws, but is found in Tasmania and also in New Zealand. Yellow Woodsorrel occurs almost throughout the state. It does form patches in lawns and gardens, but having no bulbs it is never a serious pest.

Our weekends never pass without orchid finds providing a measure of excitement. On this occasion it was a clump of Bird-orchids (there was some difference of opinion as to whether they were the Green or the Common species) growing in a leaf mould between two boulders. Unfortunately, Paul Chaplin has reported that after our visit the spot was being cleared for another lodge. Paul and a friend rescued as many tubers as possible, and re-established them in safer sites, where they will be watched with great interest.

Other orchids, including Cinnamon Bells were also found, but of these and many more interesting plants such as Alpine Sundew, Marsh Marigold, Euphrasias, Alpine Trachymene and Alpine Water-fern, only a mention is possible. Approximately 105 species were listed.

AN HOUR COUNT No. 21

Cairns North Queensland

By Roy Wheeler

Captain James Cook in the "Endeavour" sailing northward along the coast of eastern Australia passed and named Trinity Bay on Trinity Sunday June 10, 1770. Little was heard of this bay until two cutters of the North-east Coast Expedition under George Elphinstone Dalrymple called there on October 16, 1873. Dalrymple and a companion Sub-inspector R.A. Johnston of the Native Mounted Police from Cardwell came ashore from a whaleboat searching for what they thought was the mouth of a large river. Dalrymple named two prominent peaks Walsh's Pyramid and Mt. Whitfield and procured fresh water from a native well on what is now the corner of Abbott and Shield Streets in the centre of Cairns. Although George Dalrymple was disappointed that no great river entered Trinity Bay he was impressed by the inlet as a likely seaport for the interior and wrote "It may some day serve what may prove to be a highly auriferous country". How right he proved to be.

Just one month previously in September 1873, James Mulligan found gold on the Palmer River and soon after the port of Cooktown was constructed and soon became a busy port for supplies for the thousands of miners working on the Palmer fields. This discovery galvanised the whole of Queensland as in four years 40 tons of alluvial gold was taken from the Palmer field. In 1876 this field began to peter out and Mulligan and other prospectors moved further south. Tin was found on the Wild River and then gold on the Hodgkinson and the town of Thornborough became the centre and in a very short time boasted a population of 10,000. Cooktown was too far away to be the port for supplies and so Cairns was founded in 1876.

Mrs. Wheeler and I flew from Brisbane to Cairns on October 6, 1976 and we arrived not knowing, right at the peak of the Cairns centenary celebrations. We saw the end of the re-enactment of

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AN HOUR COUNT No.21 (continued)

the arrival of the first packhorse mail from Thornborough to Cairns in 1876 and I was fortunate enough to procure a letter carried by packhorse with a party of 200 horsemen and horse-women leaving the ghost town of Thornborough on 4 October 1976 and arriving at Cairns 8 October using the same track blazed 100 years before, a most arduous journey both for the riders and the horses. On Saturday October 9 according to the Cairns Post "The greatest spectacle Cairns has ever seen - the Centenary parade". For 70 minutes the procession with bands, floats and history flowed through the streets of Cairns. Hundreds of children took part and the people of Cairns were to be congratulated on such a fine display which brought in all historical events which made this city what it is today. That night a fireworks display was a grand finale for the Cairns centenary celebrations and we were most pleased to have been there for the closing stages.

Cairns is the gateway to many fascinating areas not only for the tourist but for the naturalist. As birdlife was our main interest no better area and one of world renown, are the tidal flats along the Esplanade at Cairns. Here migratory waders from Siberia, China, Mongolia, Alaska and Canada mingle with Australian species in a scene of international importance. Many plans to alter this foreshore area to be one of commercial use have been made over the years and the pressure is always there. So far the Cairns people have rejected them and I and others hope this rejection will continue. Birdwise this is one of the unique areas of the world of natural history.

Mrs. Wheeler and I did quite a number of hour counts of the birds seen from the Esplanade at Cairns and all varied in numbers and of species seen and what I regard as the best is given herewith:

Cairns, North Queensland : October 12, 1976. From a seat on the foreshore overlooking the grassy tidal flats near the Blue Water Motel with the tide coming in. Fine and warm with a cool trade wind. 10.35 to 11.35a.m. Birds in order of sighting.
Silver Gull, 200; Australian Pelican, 16; Royal Spoonbill, 32; Jabiru, 2; White Ibis, 4; Golden Plover, 6; White Egret, 22; Eastern Curlew, 6; Plumed Egret, 4; Bar-tailed Godwit, 25; Grey-tailed Tattler, 4; Little Egret, 1; Rainbow Lorikeet, 4; Magpie-lark, 2; Peaceful Dove, 6; Indian Myna, 20; Welcome

AN HOUR COUNT No.21 (continued)

Swallow, 15; Whimbrel, 30; Varied Honeyeater, 6; Caspian Tern, 5; Gull-billed Tern, 22; Little Tern, 2; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, 16; Masked Plover, 2; Red-necked Stint, 8; Terek Sandpiper, 2; Little Pied Cormorant, 3; Black-tailed Godwit, 24; Yellow Figbird, 4; Mongolian Sand-dotterel, 4; White-faced Heron, 1; Crested Tern, 1; Darter, 1; Great Knot, 3; White-breasted Wood-swallow, 2; Red-backed Sea-eagle, 1.

Total 36 species and 504 individuals.

BLACK FALCONS at WINCHELSEA

By Geoff Mathison

To my knowledge, the Black Falcon (Falco subniger) is rare in the Winchelsea district but at least two have been in the Wurdi Boluc - Winchelsea area during February and March, 1977.

My first sighting was on 2 February, while harvesting a windrowed crop of oats. Noticing that Stubble Quail, Pipits and Skylarks were very reluctant to fly away from the machine, I looked about and found two falcons stooging around 15 metres above. During their intermitent visits on the five following days, I watched about 15 chases, only two of which were successful. Both times Pipits or Skylarks were the victims. Some attacks were not continued after the first driving dive which made me wonder if the falcons had dined earlier in the day and were only practicing. I think the Pipits and/or Skylarks presented an easier target for they appeared to rely on climbing and dodging, whereas the Stubble Quail, when it did fly, kept extremely low and only moved a short distance.

Between 1 and 11 March, one falcon appeared for a time on most days to follow tractor and super-spreader back and forth over the paddocks, resting on some vantage point when the machine stopped to refill but taking up the patrol again as soon as I moved off.

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BLACK FALCONS AT WINCHELSEA (continued)

No observed kills.

On 22 March, one bird materialised over a flock of sheep as soon as they were mobbed up. Later the same day, probably the same falcon was perched on a tall stump 400 metres away but took off the instant the utility started moving, and followed the vehicle across the paddock to the road.

Obviously, these birds are well aware that unusual movement presents better opportunities for them and they are quick to take advantage of the situation.

Incidentally, it is not easy to keep machinery on its proper course while absorbed in the survival battles!!

EASTERN WATER RAT at WINCHELSEA

By Geoff Mathison

16 August, 1976. One handsome water rat in farm waterhole about 4 kms SE of Winchelsea. Disturbed while burning a dry patch of Tall Spike Rush, (Eleocharis sphacelata) about 3 metres in diameter. It returned to the unburnt rushes in the water but had disappeared 4 hours later. The water-rat had been feeding on quite large yabbies, the remains of which were in the water under the rushes. The rat probably came from the Wurdi Boluc Reservoir about 3/4 km south of the waterhole.

* * *

RECOLLECTIONS OF RUBICON

By John Hunt

The Rubicon Hydro-electric Scheme was started about 1926 to provide power for Victoria from the Rubicon and Royston Rivers. I worked there in 1927-28, running the narrow gauge works railway. During this time I had the opportunity to observe birds, animals and other aspects of nature.

On the highland the trees were mainly Mountain Ash and Messmate. The gullies were similar to the Otways - sassafras, dogwood, beech etc. and tree ferns, but they were so dense that they could not be explored. The perfume of the Otway gullies always brings back memories of the overpowering fragrance of the magnificent huge gullies in the ranges. The hills rose to 2000 feet above the beds of the Rubicon and Royston rivers, which met at the Rubicon Powerhouse at the end of the middle range. On the top of the range beside my line were several tree ferns 40 feet tall; possibly they would be what is now known as the Slender Treefern.

There was excellent trout fishing in both rivers. The contractors surveyor one day threw a line in, right in the middle of the camp area where we were working, and immediately pulled in a 6 lb. trout. When he immediately pulled in another of similar size he walked away saying that he had "done enough fishing for the day"!

Perhaps nowhere else in the state are there such thunderstorms as we experienced in those gullies. Once I missed death by 100 yards when a tree was shattered across the part of the line that I had just traversed. When the machinery was being assembled in the power house during an electrical storm, several fire balls played around among the machines - balls of blue flame - and terrified men ran outside into the pouring rain to escape them. During another storm I was working with others half way up the mountain when the 12 noon Saturday whistle blew. The winch driver was lowering the trucks to pick up the men when the power failed and

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RECOLLECTIONS OF RUBICON (continued)

the men had to scramble into the moving trucks. I had decided to climb down, and was sheltering from the rain under heavy steel plates fearing that lightning might strike them. It didn't, but it did strike the moving trucks and gave the men a nasty shock.

There was a shunting horse called Belle - a Clydesdale, on the top of the haulage. She seemed to have an inbuilt alarm clock because she would stand patiently at her feed box ready for her shunting tasks whenever she was needed. But at 5.00p.m. sharp, she would "up with her heels" and clear out at full gallop down the line to the horse yards. As 5 o'clock approached we used to have to tie her up to prevent her escape as it meant a long chase to bring her back. A trained "leader", also a Clydesdale of course, lead a team of six horses along the lines, pulling trucks of sawn timber or logs to the mill, or pulling logs through the bush. No reins at all were used, and it was wonderful to see this trained leader obeying orders and leading the "snigging" team through the bush. Along the track they could just walk between the lines, but in the bush it was a very different matter. It is a cause for regret in these days of motorization, that the only teams of these wonderful working horses to be seen are those magnificent creatures that draw the brewery wagons in Parades at Agricultural Shows. Occasionally there was an accident, and I have seen tough, hard-drinking labourers actually weep at the loss of a horse; and when the horses were sold at the end of the contract, their owners wept openly and unashamed.

There was a whistle to give signals to the winch driver:- stop, hoist etc., but six blasts on the whistle meant a fatality. So when six blasts were heard, everyone came running, the women weeping and wailing, not knowing who had been killed. It transpired that a horse had got its foot caught in the whistle-string, and had kicked six times before getting free!

In the early days my train took building materials and everything necessary for construction to the shunting yards half way to the terminus. Here I had to wait for the horse teams to return with empty trucks, when my train was divided up for each horse to take a section and I returned with the empty trucks for another





1. John Hunt on his loco at Rubicon.
2. Rubicon haulage, 1927.
3. Snow at top of haulage, 1928.
4. Horse team at Rubicon 1928 (Belle is third in line).
5. Rubicon River.

RECOLLECTIONS OF RUBICON (continued)

load. In hot weather my guard and I used to take refuge in a wombat's burrow while waiting for the horse teams. The burrow was under a spreading black wattle, was pleasantly cool, and large enough to protect us both from the searing heat.

Koalas may have lived here, but I never saw one, and I did not observe nocturnal creatures because at knock-off time I had to scramble down the range a distance of 1650 feet back to camp, and be winched up by 7 the next morning, except Sundays when the winch was not running and I had to climb the 1650 feet and be there by 7.00a.m.

High above, huge wedgetails soared frequently, and there were numerous Kookaburras. The usual small birds found in gullies could be heard, but the most vivid bird memories are of the noisy, curious, cheeky Pied Currawongs. They abounded in the area and the noise they made in the mornings, particularly when it was frosty, had to be heard to be believed. They were very curious birds, and each evening when the electricians knocked off at the switch yards they would flock over to see what had been going on during the day. When the power was eventually turned on of course several came to grief when they touched the wires, but it did not take long for them to wake up to the danger and they learned to keep away. On one occasion two small boys were playing with a tomahawk and one managed to chop off his brother's finger. They ran home and told their mother who came running, looking for the finger, but it had disappeared, presumably taken by one of the currawongs. Often I would sit on a log having lunch in complete silence:- at midday in the bush birds are notoriously silent and inconspicuous; not a bird in sight, but throw a crust or scrap of meat and scores of currawongs appeared from nowhere. Actually they had been hidden in the foliage just waiting for this to happen.

The channels were traps for native creatures unfortunately. I once saw a dead Lyrebird floating in the channel as I was driving a load of V.I.P's. up the range. Animals had been so used to using these areas in dry weather that when the water ran they were washed away. I have seen foxes with their claws worn away from scratching at the concrete sides in an effort to escape. Dozens of kangaroos, scores of foxes, snakes and an occasional

RECOLLECTIONS OF RUBICON (continued)

wombat met their doom there. During the 1939 fires, men were afraid to take refuge in the water of the forebay because of the numerous snakes they knew would be there. In one sawmill close by men spent 8 hours in ice cold water while the fire razed their mill, accommodation and everything to the ground. Of course there were rabbits about. They were shot and used for food, and it is curious to recall that some workmen from southern Europe were known to cook and eat a fox.

The gullies were inhabited by scores of Lyrebirds whose calls included the "clip clop" of the horses on the tram lines, the squeal of the brakes, the whistles of the winch engines, the screech of the saws and the blows of the tree feller's axes. Now that these activities are no longer carried out, one wonders whether the adult birds have passed on to their off-spring sounds that are no longer heard in those gullies. The calls were so accurate that it was impossible to tell them from the original sounds. It would be interesting to know if these calls are ever heard there now.

You may have heard of red-hot passion. Well, it happened at Rubicon in the main camp when two Kookaburras were mating and bridged the electric power lines - resulting in a terrific flash, a resounding bang and two wasted Kookaburras. At least they died happy!

One of the electricians discovered a dead rosella on a transformer and told me he had been looking for this for two days, because at the Powerhouse the generator had run backwards and there was a blackout. The rosella had evidently bridged the wires at the transformer.

There are no sawmills at Rubicon now. It is a catchment area for the S.E.C. and entry is prohibited. Regeneration will have taken place, and the area has probably returned to what it was before the scheme started, although the Powerhouses continue to supply electricity to the state of Victoria.

RAINBOW LORIKEETS in FYANS PARK

By Theo Trickett

Our five Rainbow Lorikeets still visited our garden nectar pots in the mornings and evenings in March 1977. The transition from Daylight Saving to E.S.T. has caused some confusion, but the net result has been that they are having an extra feed of nectar.

Their number dwindled to four during December 1976 to January 1977, and as they are not particularly shy, one feared for the fate of No.5 - or else wondered if there were to be more young ones; but No.5 is present again.

There had been a great deal of what appeared to be courtship display late last year, and actually I thought that they were nesting in a particular tree in Fyans Park. We are still uncertain if No.5 is this year's vintage, but he is certainly smaller, his beak not so bright a coral, the breast not as bright an orange-red, and the collar lime-green, not yellow, like the others. The young ones of 1975 had quite definitely brown beaks.

Very often on hot days and holidays when the river is very popular with swimmers and canoeists the Rainbows spend most of their time either in our cootamundra, or else in the tall eucalypts of neighbor's gardens. It is quite delightful to hear their sweet, soft, musing conversation as they stay quiet in the trees. They know my silver-top head, though, and there is a distinct allegretto when I move about the garden during the day, and their tones lapse again to quietness if the nectar pots are not refilled - or become a deafening crescendo if they demand food.

Rainbow Lorikeets just love apricots, pears, and Jonathon apples - but they are really very welcome to our garden, and we would not like to see our spectacularly beautiful visitors go away.

PRESIDENTS REPORT 1976 · 1977

By Edmund G. Errey

It is an honor to present my second annual report to the members of a group as large and as active as the Geelong Field Naturalists Club has been for the sixteen years of its existence.

It is not necessary for me to review in detail the activities of the last twelve months, for these are outlined on our syllabus card and detailed in our news sheets. For this record it will be enough for me to refer to the nine full-day excursions, six working bees, four displays and fourteen weekend camps.

The working bees involved planting trees at the Belmont Common and the You Yangs, and cutting out boneseed and pine seedlings on the You Yangs and at Gum Flat.

Our fourteen campouts ranged from Rocklands in the west to Baw Baw and Warragul in the east, from Heytesbury and the Otways in the south to Wyperfeld and the Bendigo Whipstick in the north. These were not merely holiday weekends, but working camps for listing and sometimes banding birds, making mammal surveys, and listing and pressing plants. The club's growing involvement with the W.V.F.N.C.A. and the V.F.N.C.A. has brought about an expansion of these activities and a valuable co-operation with field naturalists from other districts.

Guest speakers during the year, besides taking us around Australia, have conducted us on a world tour. We have been to South Africa, to China, to Nepal, and, last month, from the Seychelle Islands to Patagonia. We have even visited outer space, with members of the Astronomical Society.

One outstanding event deserves, and requires, a special mention. This is the club's very successful fete in February. Thanks are due to all who helped, especially to Jack Wheeler as organiser, and to Mrs. Campbell, in whose home and garden the fete was held.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)

The smooth running of the club each year is due in great measure to the harmonious co-operation between all those members involved. This means not only the committee, but a number of other members who work for the good of the club simply because they are members. This number, I feel, could be greatly increased. A club that can attract 100 to 120 to an illustrated travel talk should not have difficulty in mustering 10 or 12 for a working bee. This small criticism will not, I hope, cause offence to anyone, for no offence is intended. In all sincerity and in all friendliness I would appeal to everyone, both committee and general members, to keep in mind that this is our club; it will prosper according to the effort we put into it, and in direct proportion to the percentage of membership taking part in the various activities, scheduled and unscheduled.

Important among the people responsible for the continuing smooth progress of any organization are those occupying the offices of secretary and treasurer. Gordon McCarthy has been our secretary since July, 1966, when the club's original secretary, Voi Boardman, resigned prior to her marriage, and he looks like continuing at least for a time. Nearly eleven years' work in this position must be acknowledged as a most valuable contribution to the club. Gordon has agreed to continue for the present, with Geoff Gayner as assistant secretary.

Valda Dedman has completed another year's work supervising our financial affairs, which her report has shown to be in a quite healthy state. In addition, Valda has catalogued the library, and completed the reorganization instituted by Leila Ramsay and Gwen Yarnold. Their efforts have done much to improve the efficiency and smooth working of this very important service.

Each month's newsletter reminds us of the efforts of our editor, Trevor Pescott, in providing members with information on current and future happenings and reports on past ones. Sometimes, as at present, there are delays with the magazine, through printing problems, lack of material from members, or sheer overwork, but we know that the copies will eventually appear and the backlog be overcome. Last year Trevor was deeply involved in the preparation of submissions to the L.C.C. on the Corangamite Study Area, not only for this club, but for several other organizations as well.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)

The last eighteen months have seen considerable activity in this club in the publication of new books. Mrs. Daisy Wood began the trend when her book, "In Harmony with Nature", appeared in September, 1975. This contained reproductions of nearly fifty of Mrs. Wood's delightful water colors.

In the space of a month or two around July and August last year, Trevor Pescott published "The Otways", and "By Field and Lane", the former dealing with Trevor's favorite stamping ground, the latter being a selection of his weekly articles which have appeared in the "Geelong Advertiser" since May, 1960. Both books are illustrated by the author's excellent photography.

In a different category was a booklet written by Jack Wheeler and published by this club. The title, "The Care of Sick Injured and Orphaned Native Birds and Animals", is adequate explanation of its contents and of Jack's purpose in writing it. Though small in size, this publication has immense value in supplying, free of all charge, a long felt want for such vital information on the care of creatures in need. Three printings, each of 10,000 copies, have been made, mainly for distribution to schools and natural history groups throughout Australia.

A look to the future as well as to the past is appropriate at this time, and is perhaps of greater value.

A Nature Show in the spring has been mentioned at earlier meetings. Though neither the date nor the place has yet been fixed, these have been discussed at some length, and planning for displays, etc. is under way.

In mid-October, we will be host club to the W.V.F.N.C.A., and we hope to show our visitors the Brisbane Ranges at their best.

For a moment I would like you to join me for a peep further into the future, to the time when we have our own headquarters, where our equipment, library, specimens, records etc. can be housed together, where displays can be permanently set up, and where study and research can be carried out. This is something a number of us have been trying to visualize for years. The more others join in this visualizing the sooner the concept will become a practical reality.

In conclusion, may I thank once more all those who have done so much for the club during the year.

TREASURERS REPORT 1976 · 1977**By Valda Dedman**

It gives me pleasure to report another successful year financially, in spite of rising costs.

Total bank credit stands at \$1537.88, made up as follows:

General Account	\$1069.94	(\$763.79	1975/1976)
Excursion Account	117.94	(100.27	")
Deposit Stock	350.00	(350.00	")
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
TOTAL	<u>\$1537.88</u>	<u>\$1214.06</u>	

This represents an increase of \$323.82, and reflects the interest in, and support of the club by our members, many of whom gave donations in excess of their subscriptions.

Our main source of income is still from subscriptions which brought in \$1256.00. We are glad that there is still no need to raise members' fees, but it is a pity that so many dues arrived late; in fact, not until after February 1977, when 105 reminder notices were sent out, resulting in more than \$250.00 being added to our funds. I would remind you that subscriptions are due on 1st April each year.

The Fete was again a great success financially and raised \$567.16. We thank members for their support in this regard.

The sale of publications brought a profit of \$129.23. Much of this was due to the sales we made of two books, "The Otways" and "By Field and Lane", supplied to the club at cost by the author Mr. Trevor Pescott. We regard the sale of various books, magazines, charts etc. as a service to members, rather than a money-raising venture, as many publications are not readily available elsewhere and we can often offer them at a discount.

This year we donated \$100.00 towards the publication of the brochure by Mr. Jack Wheeler, "The Care of Sick Injured and Orphaned

TREASURER'S REPORT (continued)

Native Birds and Animals". We also gave \$10.00 to the Save Our Bushland Committee. We were able to make improvements to the library by the purchase of new books, catalogue cards and boxes to organize our large and valuable collection of natural history magazines.

We are continually gaining new members, to whom we give a warm welcome, yet our overall membership has declined. Owing to rising costs, mainly in the publication and distribution of the "Geelong Naturalist", we are forced to remove unfinancial members from our mailing list after twelve months.

Present financial membership is as follows:

Single Adult	164	(163	1975/76)
Joint Adult (55)	110	(110	")
Family (28)	128	(164	")
Junior/Student	23	(27	")
	<u>425</u>	<u>464</u>	

Subscribers to "Naturalist" 62.

Of these 42 were Supporting Memberships and 38 have the excursion sheet posted monthly.

All donations to Mr. Jack Wheeler's brochure, "The Care of Sick Injured and Orphaned Native Birds and Animals" have been paid into our Account No.3. To date we have paid for the printing and distribution of 10,000 copies and have sufficient cash in hand to pay for a further 20,000.

Our "reserve" fund of \$350.00 held as Deposit Stock earned us \$28.00 in interest during the past year.

Many thanks to my assistants for their help during the year. Mrs. Betty Quirk and Mrs. Muriel Macauley coped with the rush of business at the start of the monthly meetings, Miss Leila Ramsay capably handled all bus and accommodation bookings, and Miss Jean Hoggart audited the books.

GEELONG FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB: TREASURER'S STATEMENT
YEAR 1976/1977

GENERAL ACCOUNT

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Subscriptions	1256.00	Printing-Geelong Naturalist	765.50
Sale Publications	798.82	-Other	158.10
Donations	163.75	Postage	119.63
Interest	18.94	Petty Cash	143.76
Fete	567.16	Affiliation Fees	136.40
Sundries	27.95	Rent	147.00
		Publications	669.59
		Insurance	69.33
		Library	122.15
		Donations-to Brochure	100.00
		-to Save Our	
		Bushland Committee	10.00
		Sundries	95.01
	<u>2832.62</u>		<u>2536.47</u>

Bank Reconciliation Statement to 21/3/77

Bank Balance as at 18/3/76	914.82
Less unrepresented cheques nos. 977, 978, 988.	151.03
	<u>763.79</u>
Receipts for 12 months to 21/3/77	2832.62
	<u>3596.41</u>
Expenditure " " " " "	2536.47
	<u>1059.94</u>
Unrepresented cheques nos. 291, 299.	10.00
	<u>1069.94</u>
Unentered credit 18/3/77	51.40
	<u>1018.54</u>
Bank Statement	1018.54
	<u> </u>
Balance Income over Expenditure 1976/1977 =	\$296.15

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EXCURSION ACCOUNT

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Bus - Botanical Gardens	116.00	Refunds	66.00
Deposits - bus	41.00	Deposit - Baw Baw	10.00
- accommodation	8.00	Trans Otway - bus	105.00
Interest	5.67		
" from Deposit Stock	28.00		
	<u>198.67</u>		<u>181.00</u>

Bank Reconciliation Statement to 21/3/77

Bank Balance as at 18/3/76	100.27
Receipts for 12 months to 21/3/77	198.67
	<u>298.94</u>
Expenditure " " " "	<u>181.00</u>
Bank Statement	<u>117.94</u>
Balance Income over Expenditure 1976/1977 =	\$17.67

DEPOSIT STOCK \$350.00
Interest 28.00 transferred to Excursion Account

ACCOUNT NO.3

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Donations to Brochure	1803.04	Printing-10000	800.00
Interest	14.07	copies	
		Sundries-postage	
		etc.	232.40
	<u>1817.11</u>		<u>1032.40</u>

Bank Reconciliation Statement to 21/3/77

Bank Balance as at 18/3/76	905.00
Receipts for 12 months to 21/3/77	1817.11
	<u>2722.11</u>
Expenditure " " " "	<u>1032.40</u>
	<u>1689.71</u>
Unentered credit 18/3/77	12.00
Bank Statement	<u>1677.71</u>
Balance Income over Expenditure 1976/1977 =	\$784.71



FROGS BREATHE AIR

TADPOLE TO FROG - By Cameron Grant

Every spring we like to catch tadpoles and watch them grow. It is quite exciting when we see little knobs begin to grow where their hind legs will appear. At the same time the tail slowly becomes shorter. The process of changing to a frog has begun. The front legs didn't come as soon as we expected, and then one day we would find poor froggie floating lifeless on top of the water, with all four legs outstretched.

This spring we solved the problem by putting a little rock in the water for the baby frog to sit on when his forelegs popped out of the sacs that held them. The change from gills to lungs seems to take place at the same time, so that is why our other poor tadpoles didn't survive when their fore-legs appeared. They were no longer able to breathe under water, and had no rock to sit on when they needed to get out of the water.

(The excellent observations by Cameron Grant show how we can learn a great deal about nature from simple experiments. Perhaps other Junior Members have had similar experiences with other creatures - Wanderer Butterflies, for example, are good subjects to study. "Junior Pages" are set aside for your notes and observations.)

In October, the G.F.N.C. is to hold a Nature Show and part of the Show will be a Poster Competition. More news about this will be given at the Junior Meetings which are held each first Tuesday in the month.

See your Syllabus Card, too, to find out which subjects will be talked about each month.

A LAST WORD

By Trevor Pescott

One of the most important issues currently facing conservationists in Australia is that of whaling, with one station operating at Albany in Western Australia, we are one of the few nations still exploiting these great mammals.

A visit to the Albany station museum is enlightening if one looks in depth at some of the exhibits on display; one feature is a series of charts pin-pointing where the whales were taken each year.

Most are quite closely offshore, but each year the chasers have to go further and further out to make their kills - obviously the whales are becoming scarcer and this in itself must sound an alarm.

The species taken at Albany is the Sperm Whale - to date it remains as the most plentiful of all species of great whales, but how long this situation remains is difficult to visualise.

Already the Blue Whale and the Humpback are very rare - as are the Fin and Southern Right; we Australians have contributed directly to the decline of the Humpback for the Byron Bay Whaling Station which operated up until 1966 in New South Wales, killed this species.

The method of killing is cruel - the explosive-headed harpoon is manually aimed, and often the charge injures but does not kill the whale; the harpoon cable holds the animal, until a second or third harpoon can be unleashed.

Cruelty is only part of the issue - far more important is the maintenance of the species, and this we are not doing; publicity from the whalers claim that the industry "farms the animals".

This is, of course, not so - unlike land animals which can be "farmed" by providing suitable habitat, we have no way of retaining much less improving the whale's habitat.

continued

A LAST WORD (continued)

Let us hope that the June 23-24 International Whaling Commission at Canberra brings to a close our participation in this wanton destruction of the world's greatest animals.

TREVOR PESCOTT, Hon. Editor.

COMING EVENTS

- May 3 General Meeting. Mr. J. Loney, "Ships and Coastline".
 15 Excursion. Serendip. Leader, Mr. T. Pescott.
 21 Working bee. Pine cutting, Anglesea.
- June 7 General Meeting. Mr. K. Simpson.
 11-13 Camp-out. Otways. Leaders, G. Gayner, T. Pescott.
 19 Excursion. Kalimna Falls. Leader, Mr. G. Gayner.
 25-26 Working bee. Tree Planting, You Yangs.
- July 5 General Meeting. Miss M. White, "Anglesea".
 17 Excursion. Angahook Park. Leader, Mrs. V. Dedman.
 23 Working bee. Tree Planting, Belmont Common.

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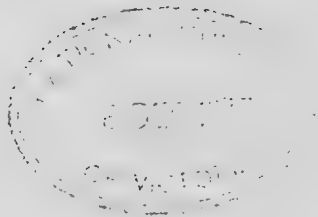
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GEELONG NATURALIST



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Club

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The Statements and the opinions contained in the papers published in this Journal are the responsibility of the respective authors.

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The You Yangs of other days

By Rolf Baldwin

On the way to the recent Ceremony of the Boneseed at the You Yangs some quirk of light, or air, or sky, or foliage triggered a memory of thirty years ago. In those days the entrance to the reserve was a battered old pipe and wire gate at the end of Forest Road a couple of hundred yards West of the present arch. Just inside the gate on the right-hand side stood a huge Yellow Gum (E. leucoxylon) since fallen on evil days and a mere shadow of what it was in its mighty prime.

The time of the memory was a calm, dazzlingly sunny day in early summer and the tree, together with many another in the reserve, was absolutely loaded with blossom. And not only with blossom! That year the nectar drinkers were on the move and our favourite tree was crowded, in a density never seen before or since, with Regent Honeyeaters (Zanthomiza phrygia) and Rainbow Lorikeets (Trichoglossus haematodus). So busy were they, so swift and volatile in their movements that it was quite impossible to count them, but we thought that between them the two species numbered more than one hundred.

In that bright, calm sunlight the rainbow colours of the lorikeets and the bold gold and black of the honeyeaters contrasted and blended most memorably with the cream of the blossom and the olive of the foliage. It was an unforgettable lesson in the fact that there is more joy in the study of birds than the sighting of a rarity and the counting of species.

Once the door was opened other memories came thronging of those far-off times. How far-off it is hard to realize till one thinks that in those years just after the war, before the explosion of the population and the motor car, great tracts of our country were still much the same as they had been in the twenties or, for that matter, at the turn of the century.

THE YOU YANGS OF OTHER DAYS (continued)

The fences along Forest Road ran straight, then as now, and the road formation ran straight down the middle, but a winding effect was given by the numerous dirt tracks on either side by which, in fair weather, travellers by car or push-bike sought to avoid the rough pot-holed metal, or the vilely corrugated gravel of the road proper. All of this we knew well by experience in all weathers, for every Saturday parties of boys from the Grammar School used to go for the day to the "Youies", generally accompanied by a master or two. Bikes were the means of locomotion and nearly always the pilgrims were naturalists, for it was only seldom that any others would go "for a day in the bush".

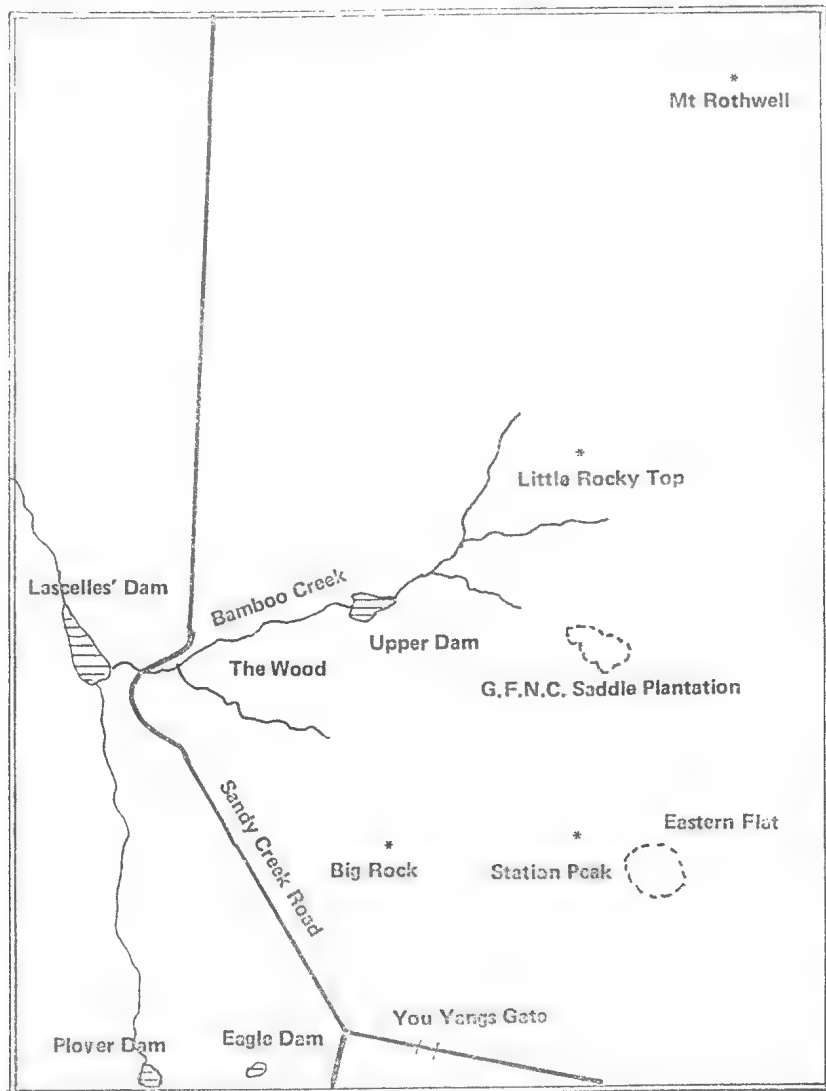
There was more to it, though, than Natural History. The magnet that drew these boys was bird photography, at that time still a matter of the hide, either "close" or "distant, with trip thread", ordinary hand cameras, black-and-white film and their own printing and developing. There was just enough in it of hunting and the mechanical to appeal very much to boys.

Naturally the main time of activity was in the nesting season. Under the nomadic, once-a-week conditions to which the photographers were subjected food lures of any sort were ineffective and it was part of the traditional lore that the only place in which a bird could be caught in the proper position was round about the nest. So the nest hunting gave them the same primitive joy that, in earlier generations, had enthused the detested egg collectors. They were, however, very discreet in their searches, for it was a point of pride never to make a bird desert the nest.

Naturally, as there were incomparably so many more nesting species to be found at the You Yangs than anywhere else within easy bike range, that was the main field of activity. Because of the skill involved the photographers were mostly senior boys who were interested in bird observing as well, for its own sake, and their enthusiasms communicated themselves to the juniors who used to join most parties. The typical group was ten or a dozen, comprising seniors, middles and juniors and there was little that escaped the combined vigilance of their eyes.

Nowadays it is impossible to imagine the You Yangs free of bone-seed, but so they were for a long time after the war. It is only

LOCALITY PLAN



Scale 1:63360



THE YOU YANGS OF OTHER DAYS (continued)

in the last twenty years or so that the really devastating spread has taken place. Nor in those days of the forties was there anything like the present network of car tracks, but this was no worry for bikes could be wheeled or ridden in most parts of the range, except the very rockiest.

One picture that comes vividly to mind is that of a small party wheeling bikes from Eastern Flat, then undisturbed by gravel quarrying, up to the saddle where G.F.N.C. now does its planting and then riding cross-country, without any track at all, down the gully on the western side. In that gully can still be seen, in a sea of boneseed, a clump of bamboos that was one of the noted haunts of "New Hollands" as we always called the Yellow-winged Honeyeater (Phylidonyris novaehollandiae).

Where we were going on that particular day now eludes the memory. It might have been to the left, towards Big Rock, or straight down to "The Wood" that was then on the point between the two main branches of what we called Bamboo Creek or across to "The Upper Dam", again on Bamboo Creek, just below Station Peak homestead. Or again, we might have been going further afield. With no Ford Proving Ground to bar the way we might have been going up towards Little Rocky Top or across the smooth open paddocks to Mount Rothwell where there was an old wedgie's nest that had been taken over for a couple of years by a pair of Peregrine Falcons (Falco peregrinus). Wherever we went we would probably come home by way of Lascelles' Dam near Woolloomanata homestead and then down Hovell's Creek past Plover Dam and then out to Forest Road by way of Eagle Dam.

Wherever it was going, that party was probably one of the reconnaissance groups which were on the move in all seasons, keeping a general eye on bird movements and bird behaviour that might give clues to what would be happening in the nesting season. From experience it was known what was likely in the various areas but there were often surprises. Once it was the sighting at Big Rock, in a couple of hours on one day, of six different species of robin - Yellow (Eopsaltria australis), Hooded (Petroica cucullata), Scarlet (P. multicolor), Flame (P. phoenicia), all of which were frequently seen, and then an odd Red-cap (P. goodenovii) and

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THE YOU YANGS OF OTHER DAYS (continued)

a single clear view of a Pink (P. rodinogaster). On another occasion, in sunny weather, as we were moving past Upper Dam towards Little Rocky Top we came upon a great flock of Rainbow-birds (Merops ornatus), estimated at maybe one hundred, all concentrated in one grassy depression, dotted with silver wattle and three or four acres in area. The impression of their strange, uncertain flight, of the incomparable brilliance of their plumage and of their twittering calls is still vivid over the years.

Again it was a pair of Southern Stone-curlew (Burhinus magnirostris), with their unforgettably large eyes and dignified department, right near the forest gate. Nor was it always birds that surprised us. On one morning of very heavy fog that limited visibility to a couple of yards, in between two huge tors on the way to Little Rocky Top, we came upon a carpet of the most delicately beautiful orchids, extending over several square yards. Though they were obviously greenhoods of some sort none of us had ever seen any quite like them. Fortunately a botanist was consulted who identified them as the rare Pterostylis truncata. In its day this was quite a notable discovery.

Such were some of the highlights of our Saturday wanderings. Through all these memories, however, and many, many more, runs like an accompaniment the pursuit of the birds of prey. There was the fierce-looking Goshawk (Accipiter fasciatus) pair which lived for many years in "The Wood"; there were the Kestrels (Falco cenchroides) and the Brown Falcons (F. berigora); there were the ubiquitous "whistlers" (Haliastur sphenurus) which still seem now, as they did then, "eagles".

All of these had our regard, but none so securely as the peregrine and the noble "wedgie". The former we saw fairly frequently but only once did we find them nesting, in the old eagle's nest on Mount Rothwell. On that occasion, though hopes were high, there was no success. Fourteen stone "Big Bill" heroically climbed thirty feet of trunk as straight and as branchless as a power-pole, using six-inch nails - "they don't bend down if you keep the edge of your foot tight against the trunk" - but no camera could be placed.

THE YOU YANGS OF OTHER DAYS (continued)

As for the Wedge-tailed Eagles, at one time and another we had half a dozen active nests under observation in the You Yangs area. There were ingenious plans, once including the successful use of a home-made rope ladder, for surmounting the difficulties connected with each one. Each time, however, we were foiled by a small group of egg collectors who then infested the Geelong district. It was only long afterwards that two of the one time You Yangs photographers finally attained the goal when David Corke and Graham Pizzey secured the magnificent eagle sequences of "Raak".

So these random memories close. To one looking back it seems that much has been defaced and much lost. There is the devastation of the gravel pits, extending their blight in all directions. There are the car tracks which thread the whole reserve in an intricate web. There seems to be an absolute decline both in bird species and in numbers of individuals. There is the triffid-like spread of the boneseed. Yet there is hope, too. At least one car track has been blocked and an end put to its erosion, while the flourishing plantations of the G.F.N.C. and the B.O.C., provided only they can be kept free of boneseed, give promise of happier days to come.

TWENTY_EIGHT PARROTS IN HIGHTON**By Trevor Pescott**

The sighting of two Twenty-eight Parrots in Highton during the first week of March this year has added a "new" bird to the Geelong list. These birds have become increasingly plentiful in the Melbourne area, apparently from deliberate releases, for they are not indigenous to Southern Victoria. The Highton birds were feeding on apples in a garden in Carroll Court.

THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER

By Eric Bound

Some little while ago I was shown the accompanying photo which is in the possession of Mr. Tim Reilly of Ocean Grove, and bears the above title. It depicts one Jack Riley standing at the door of his hut near the foot of Mt. Kosciusko at Tom Groggin, and the interesting thing is, that it was taken in 1904 by the late Mr. George Hope while he was on a walking trip in the area. A keen bushwalker and photographer, Mr. Hope was a member of the Geelong Field Naturalists in his latter years, until his death early in 1966.

The subject of the photo, Mr. Jack Riley, is considered by many to be the actual hero of Banjo Patterson's famous poem, as the following information would indicate. Jack Riley, manager of Tom Pierce's cattle station at Tom Groggin from the early 1880's, lived in a log cabin near the banks of the Upper Murray for about 30 years. The cabin was always a welcome stopover for bushwalkers who accepted the challenge of this difficult terrain, and Riley's vast knowledge of the wild mountainous area was always available to those seeking a weather report, or information of any sort regarding general conditions in this rugged area. It was here that the Riley legend was born.

One night in early 1890, Banjo Patterson accompanied by Walter Mitchell (whose descendents still live in the area), spent the night in Riley's hut, and as a result of the stories he heard, Patterson evolved the poem, "The Man From Snowy River", which was first published in the "Bulletin" in 1892. Although other noted riders of the period were put forward as being the original man from Snowy River, there seems little doubt that Riley's account of the wild ride after, and subsequent capture of a noted stallion, was the basic inspiration for the poem.

THE MAN FROM SHOWN RIVER



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THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER (continued)

Riley, who was a great bush rider and stockman and well known throughout the Alps, was not born in the area, but migrated to Sydney from Ireland in 1851, after which he travelled to Omeo to live with a widowed sister where he started business as a tailor. Always a lover of horses, he made several trips to the Bogong High plains to take part in the annual cattle muster, but only as a guest. Then one year he was invited to join the muster as a paid hand, and, accepting the offer with alacrity, he joined the stockmen as an equal for the great muster to get the cattle down before winter. Then when his sister remarried about 1860, he closed his tailoring business and took a job on a cattle station near Omeo. It was good brumby country, and he soon won a name as a top bushman, brumby hunter, and outlaw tamer among the Gippsland and Snowy mountain riders. Then in 1880 he was given charge of the cattle station at Tom Groggin, owned by Upper Murray grazier Tom Pierce and situated in some of Australia's wildest mountain country.

Over the next thirty years he got to know the country in great detail, and learned the ways of the brumby mobs, and where they could be found.

In the mid 1880's he was asked to join a party of crack riders in an attempt to capture a thoroughbred stallion which was running with the wild bush horses in the vicinity of Mt. Leatherhead. He agreed to do so on condition that they built a yard along a creek at the foot of Mt. Leatherhead. The mob was located as Riley had predicted, on a high ridge, and when the riders closed in, the stallion plunged straight down an almost precipitous slope with Riley in close pursuit. The area was pitted with wombat burrows, strewn with loose shale and covered with scrub. Both horses literally tobogganed down the fearsome slope, and at the bottom, the stallion, panicky and confused, blundered into the prepared corral where Riley, with the sliprails up, calmly awaited the arrival of the rest of the party who had taken an easier way down.

Thus it was that in 1890 when Banjo Patterson and Walter Mitchell spent the night in his hut, he was persuaded to tell the account of his ride and successful capture of the stallion. The story greatly impressed Patterson, and there is little doubt that it formed the basis of his now famous poem. Allowing for poetic

THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER (continued)

licence it was the story of Riley's ride.

Riley eventually died in July 1914, while being brought from his hut at Tom Groggin in a seriously ill condition, to the hospital at Corryong - 60 miles of the worst going imaginable and in the middle of an Alpine winter. He is buried at Corryong, and a simple headstone carries a plaque which states "In memory of the man from Snowy River - Jack Riley - buried here 18th July 1914". No age was given, none of his friends knew definitely, estimates ranged between 80-87 years. One thing is certain however, the story of the Man from Snowy River will be remembered long after any uncertainty regarding his age is forgotten, and as Banjo Patterson concludes in the final lines of his famous poem -

"And where around the overflow the reed beds sweep and sway,
To the breezes and the rolling plains are wide.
The Man from Snowy River is a household word today.
And the stockmen tell the story of his ride."

Rare Birds Near Winchelsea

By Geoff Mathison

- 13/2/77 SPOTTED HARRIER - about 4 km south-east of Winchelsea.
17/2/77 LETTERWING KITE - 2.5 km south-east of Winchelsea.
LITTLE FALCON - smartening up the evasion techniques of Pipits about 3 km south-east of Winchelsea.
20/2/77 CAPE BARREN GEESE-2 birds "at pasture" adjacent to the channel outlet at Cundare Pool.

An Hour Count No. 22 — Yungaburra,

North Queensland

By Roy Wheeler

A brochure concerning the Cairns to Kuranda railway states "Hundreds of men, armed with only picks and shovels and courage, conquered this difficult mountain country and built the 34 km of line between Cairns and Kuranda". This railway was started in 1884 only eight years after Cairns was founded. Hacking their way through virgin jungle, spanning deep gorges, cutting 15 tunnels through rocky mountains, they eventually reached Kuranda in 1888 - after 4 years of unremitting toil.

This was first gateway to the tablelands. The railway reached Mareeba in 1893 and after a ten years wait reached Atherton in 1903. The Atherton Tablelands were then clothed in the finest rain forest in northern Queensland. In 1907 the Queensland Government threw open 35000 acres of scrub south and east of Atherton for dairying and the great clearing started. If you fly over the Atherton Tableland it gives you an idea of how little of this remarkable forest was preserved. Small pockets about Lake Barrine, Lake Eacham, the Curtain Fig and the Danbulla Forest bordering on the Tinaroo Dam are all that is left. Further south areas about Malanda, Millaa Millaa, Tully Falls and the Mt. Hypipamee Crater are also pitiously small, very little clear thinking to allow a great forest to be cleared so completely. After the mining on the outer fringes gave out, saw milling took over and the forests were ravaged for their finest timbers and the settlers clearing for their dairy farms were next. Land was cleared for maize and peanuts and in later years tobacco. The rich volcanic soil and a splendid rainfall made it a particularly rich agricultural district.

Mrs. Wheeler and I went to the Atherton Tableland on October 13, 1976, and stayed a week at the Lake Eacham Hotel-Motel at Yungaburra and during that time visited Lake Eacham National Park,

AN HOUR COUNT (continued)

Lake Barrine National Park, the Crater National Park, the Curtain Fig and Tinnaroo Dam. All of these are good bird areas with many species only found in this area. In 1890 Henry Sydney Williams possibly the best known pioneer of this district settled at Yungaburra. The Williams family built the Lake Eacham Hotel entirely of silky oak. It now has motel accommodation and its spacious dining room, sitting room and winding staircase and lovely tropical garden are special features with excellent service as well.

Mr. Will Coleman settled on Gwynne Creek out beyond the Curtain Fig from Yungaburra nearly 50 years ago with his wife and young family. He grew vegetables, fruit, eggs and other produce for the Cairns market. The famous Gillies Highway was constructed in 1924-25 and was reputed to have 612 bends and it was down this road each week Will Coleman drove his car to Cairns. Now long after he has finished his weekly run the road bends have been reduced to under 300. Each time we visit the Tableland we visit the Coleman family. Their farm has always been a haven for birdlife and we made an hour bird count during a visit. The rules are you sit and watch without moving from your seat and record all birds heard and seen within binocular range. It gives you the basic bird list for the area. Try it some time. Here are the details, birds in order of sighting:

Gwynne Creek, Yungaburra, Atherton Tableland, North Queensland.
October 19, 1976. From chairs near the gate and overlooking the garden and back paddock. 9.15 to 10.15. Fine and warm with slight north breeze. Observers William and son Robert Coleman, Vera and Roy Wheeler.

Yellow Figbird, 23; Olive-backed Oriole, 2; Peaceful Dove, 1; Magpie-lark, 4; Brown Honeyeater, 6; White Ibis, 7; Crow, 1; Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, 4; Rufous Whistler, 2; Indian Myna, 13; Cattle Egret, 9; Eastern Swamphen, 6; Lewin Honeyeater, 8; Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, 3; Fork-tailed Kite, 3; Spangled Drongo, 10; Silvereye, 16; Straw-necked Ibis, 5; Willie Wagtail, 2; Grey Shrike-thrush, 3; Black Duck, 20; White-throated Warbler, 1; Laughing Kookaburra, 1; Dollar-bird, 1; Scarlet Honeyeater, 1; Whistling Eagle, 1; Leaden Flycatcher, 1; Black-backed Magpie, 1; Masked Plover, 2; White-throated Honeyeater, 2; White-necked Heron, 1; White-winged Triller, 1; Red-browed Finch, 6; Black Treecreeper, 1; Sarus Crane, 5.
Total 35 species and 176 individuals.

A Mirrnyong — What is that?

By L. Lane

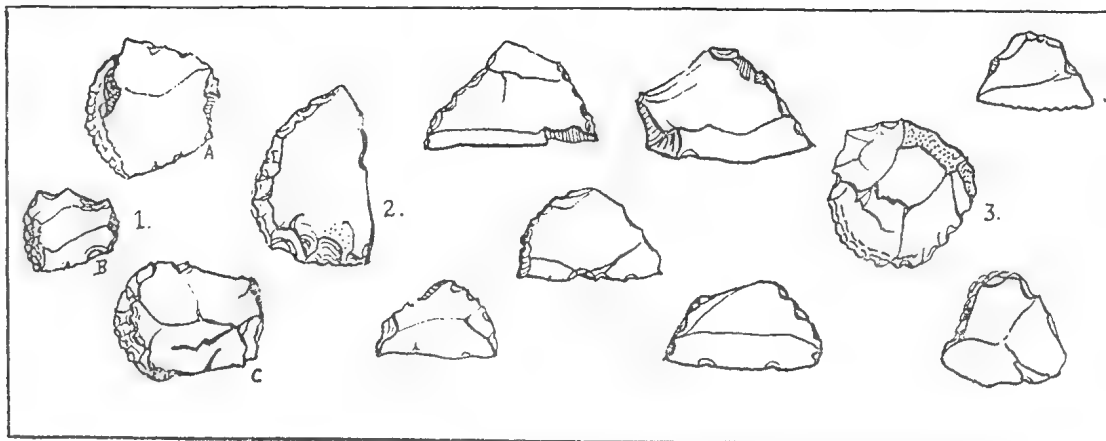
Native living places containing food refuse, burnt earth and baked stones in the soil matrix, appeared as oval, dome-like mounds which resisted erosion because the heat of the cooking-fires tended to vitrify sand particles, forming scoria.

Oven mounds were a common feature of the landscape when Victoria was first colonized in the 19th century, but most of them were destroyed once the land was cultivated.

An oven mound was a man-made heap which became an integral part of the landscape only after generations of people had camped periodically in one particular spot for many decades. The annual accumulation of the litter of their living, trapped between varves of dust, became compacted but gradually raised a slight elevation on the terrain. It has been demonstrated by archaeological excavations carried out by the Aboriginal Relics Office that tribal campers deliberately built up the summit of their campsite. Ethnographic evidence suggests that, sometimes, they erected a hut on a mound.

The soil in this man-hill was different - organically richer, more friable - than the surrounding ground so that a living-mound often carried a crown of turf more verdant than that growing upon unmodified earth. It is a fact that vegetational difference is sometimes the only clue left today to identify such a site, especially if the land has been ploughed frequently. Otherwise, a roundish patch of black or ashy soil may be revealed when a paddock is harrowed.

Because an oven mound was less compact than its surroundings, when the country was overrun with rabbits, the man-hill was an ideal situation for a rabbit warren. Farmers ripped it out and raked

A MIRRNYONGI WHAT'S THAT? (continued)GEOMETRIC MICROLITHS COLLECTED IN THE VICINITY OF DRYSDALE

1. (A,B,C) Thumbnail Scrapers

2. Bondai Point

3. Utilized discoidal core

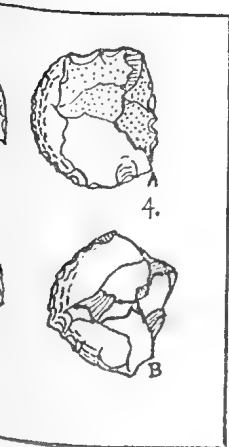
4. (A,B) Semi-discoidal

The remainder are called Trapezoid Blades. All the artifacts are shown slightly larger than lifesize.

it down to destroy the pests, or, because it was known to be enriched with traces of organic matter, it was carted away by the drayload to topdress lawns or to provide fertile loam for kitchengardens.

If possible, Aboriginal cooks chose clay soil for their cooking-hearth. Into this material they excavated a hollow with digging-sticks and wooden scoops, just large enough to accommodate the carcase they were about to cook.

A skilfully built fire heated whatever cooking elements they chose to place in the pit - shards of rock or cobblestones of a convenient size to handle when red-hot, or, perhaps, chunks of termite mound or baked balls of clay - all of which were capable of being heated until incandescent.



A variety of insulating materials were available to envelop the flesh so that it could not scorch - feathers, grass, leaves or bark all doused in water. There is not a shred of doubt that Aboriginal chefs understood the principles of cooking with superheated steam, for they habitually introduced more water into the oven during the cooking process. Hot sand, ashes and glowing embers were heaped on a lid of bark or clay in a cordon bleu style à la braise.

The contents of the oven was cooked by the method of diminishing heat which never permitted the viands to parch. No French Maître could do better than this! So, when you are popping a foil-wrapped turkey into your modern wall-oven controlled by a battery of knobs and buttons, reflect that your method is not essentially different from that used by the indigenes of this country.

The Aborigines were, of course, merely practising the skills bequeathed to them by remote ancestors who first crouched over flames in the long-dead mists of the past making a momentous discovery. Bison was easier to bite when it had been softened in the fire!

The sandy ridges west of Drysdale, extending as far as Curlewis, including the area now occupied by the Golf Links, were once eminently suitable camping sites. A fine stream flowed through the dunes, broadening into marshes in the dells between. This formed habitat for fish, fowl and fresh-water shellfish - nor was it too far from the shore where plenty of mud-oysters and sea-urchins were to be had. Animals frequented the environs. Tufts of kangaroo grass which afforded good shelter for small birds like emu-wrens, enclosed sweet grain in the spiky glumes. There was an abundance of puffballs to be harvested in season and patches of cranberries in the littermat below the oaks. Luscious dollops of translucent gum oozed on the trunks of acacias. These were

A MIRRNYONG! WHAT'S THAT? (continued)

good to eat unless they were required for adhesive. After the golden wattleblossoms, a wealth of seeds to crush for food. Legions of banksia flower-spikes for producing honey-mead also attracted stingless honey-bees and honey-suckers both of which lent enrichment to the menus of those who dwelt thereabouts.

Even today, if the mantle of vegetation is removed by drought, excavation or cultivation, the light, loose topsoil blows away, depositing occupational debris. Heavy materials such as hearth-stones, shells, lithic flakes, bones, charcoal and calcined clay are exposed in every blowout, presenting clear indications of the customary camping-sites of the local tribespeople. Many of the small, exquisite blades which we now call geometric microliths have been collected in this district, revealing that the area had been populated for several thousands of years before Europeans arrived.

Every tribe had its own name for these mound structures. The word "Mirrnyong" is one such applicable name which is often quoted, yet no-one seems positive of the precise meaning of the term. Some writers suggest the name indicated the roots which southern tribes liked to roast as an accompaniment to their meat course. Others think it was applied to the huge piles of rushes which were fired to recover the starch in the root-stocks. Some say it meant the prominence itself which was built high enough to provide a dry platform when the land was inundated with rain. Nobody rightly knows.

One tribe called an egg a "Minyong". It can hardly be supposed that linguists so facile in the use of metaphor that they named a constellation after the row of toeholes that they carved into a tree-trunk, or dubbed camels "Emu-brothers", would hesitate to call a cooking-dome an "Egg".

APPENDIX 1

Aboriginal economy was parasitic upon the environment. The forager ate what was immediately available because it was not

A MIRRNYONG! WHAT'S THAT? (continued)

practical to hoard foodstuffs.

The following flora and fauna are mentioned in the text:-

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Mud oysters - <u>Ostrea angasi</u> |) | Poached in their own shells |
| 2. Sea urchins - <u>Echinus</u>
<u>esculentis</u> |) | in hot ashes round the cooking-
hearth. |
| 3. Kangaroo grass - <u>Themida</u>
<u>australis</u> |) | Ground and baked on coals as
a bun-loaf. |
| 4. Puffballs - <u>Lycoperdon</u> or
<u>Calvatia</u> sp. |) | Fungi and berries were eaten
raw in most cases. Puffball
spores utilized as cosmetic |
| 5. Cranberries - <u>Astriema</u>
<u>humifusum</u> |) | for ritual decoration. |
| 6. Wattle (gum) - <u>Acacia</u>
<u>pycnantha</u> |) | Eaten raw or dissolved in
water and sweetened with honey. |
| 7. Wattle (seeds) - <u>Acacia</u>
<u>longifolia</u> |) | Greed pods toasted, unripe
seeds eaten half-cooked.
Mature seeds ground to grist. |
| 8. Emu wrens - <u>Stipiturus</u>
<u>malachurus</u> |) | Small creatures were seared
in flames to remove integument,
wrapped in a parcel, cooked |
| 9. Honey-eaters - <u>Conophila picta</u>
<u>Anthochaera</u>
<u>carunculata</u> |) | slowly in a trench. The bark
wrapping formed a "plate". |
| 10. Banksia (blossoms) - <u>Banksia</u>
<u>marginata</u> |) | Nectar dissolved in water,
soma allowed to ferment. |
| 11. Honey-bees - <u>Trigonia</u>
<u>carbonaria</u> |) | Honey eaten in the comb,
nymphs and all. |
| 12. She-oaks - <u>Casuarina stricta</u> |) | Cones edible in the sub-acid
stage. Cladodes chewed to
alleviate thirst. |

Mud Islands Campout 1977

By Trevor Pescott

Twenty-one Club members and others camped on Mud Islands for the weekend January 29 to 31, 1977. Most were interested in bird observing, and the list of 51 species recorded is one of the best we have made during these weekend camps. The most unusual bird seen was the Broad-billed Sandpiper, a species rarely noted in the Geelong area; although only one bird was counted, it was seen in at least two different parts of the islands by different observers.

Waders were numerous, and a highlight was the flocks of curlews and others which came in over the islands from the direction of Swan Bay; pelicans were present in large groups and camped on the lagoon.

Another unusual observation was a congregation of 73 Eastern Common Terns.

The birds seen, with numbers counted, were -

White-faced Storm-petrel - a total of 596 birds were caught and banded by Geoff Gayner and Vin Yeoman. Mistnets were used to trap the birds at night as they returned to their nesting rookery.

Short-tailed Shearwater - about 100 birds offshore.

Black Cormorant - only four seen around the island.

Little Black Cormorant - five offshore.

Black-faced Cormorant - only one noted.

Pied Cormorant - eight, roosting on a washed out leucopogon shrub in the shallows offshore.

Little Pied Cormorant - a total of about 30 seen.

Australian Gannet - two seen from the islands.

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MUD ISLANDS CAMPOUT 1977 (continued)

- Australian Pelican - a large flock seen on the lagoon, a total of 150 counted.
- Caspian Tern - 30 in a flock; there has been a substantial breeding of the species on Mud Islands this season.
- Eastern Common Tern - the largest group totalled 73 birds; many others seen in smaller groups.
- Crested Tern - there was a substantial colony nesting here in November 1976; large numbers of adults and immature birds present.
- Little Tern - two positively identified; many others were doubtful records.
- Fairy Tern - a small nesting colony on eggs, on the western shell-bank.
- Silver Gull - large numbers present, nesting finished.
- Pacific Gull - five adults and three immature birds seen.
- Arctic Skua - two offshore.
- Turnstone - very plentiful, all around the island.
- Pied Oystercatcher - a total of 30 counted.
- Sooty Oystercatcher - two seen on the islands.
- Spur-winged Plover - only three seen.
- Grey Plover - a total of 150 were noted in flocks of varying sizes.
- Golden Plover - 50 recorded, mainly singly or in small groups.
- Mongolian Sand-dottarel - 30 seen around the island shores.
- Double-banded Dottarel - twelve noted.
- Large Sand-dottarel - only one identified.
- Red-capped Dottarel - at least 30 around the islands, no nests found.
- Eastern Curlew - over 100; some large flocks seen over the lagoon late in the afternoon and early morning.
- Bar-tailed Godwit - total at least 150 seen.

MUD ISLANDS CAMPOUT 1977 (continued)

Grey-tailed Tattler - eight noted over the weekend.

Greenshank - only ten seen.

Curlew-sandpiper - very plentiful, no estimate of numbers

Red-necked Stint - very plentiful, no count made.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper - 50 counted.

Knot - large numbers feeding over the shallows and in the lagoon.

Great Knot - a count of 18 was made.

Broad-billed Sandpiper - only one seen; this is the most interesting sighting for the weekend.

White Ibis - only three seen over the islands.

Royal Spoonbill - a flock of 23 were feeding over the lagoon shallows.

White-faced Heron - the count revealed about 20 individuals.

Black Swan - 30, scattered over the lagoon and shallows offshore.

Mountain Duck - a flock of 12 were seen.

Grey Teal - two birds noted in the lagoon.

Swamp Harrier - only two recorded over the islands.

Welcome Swallow - only two seen.

White-fronted Chat - five recorded.

Little Grassbird - four noted.

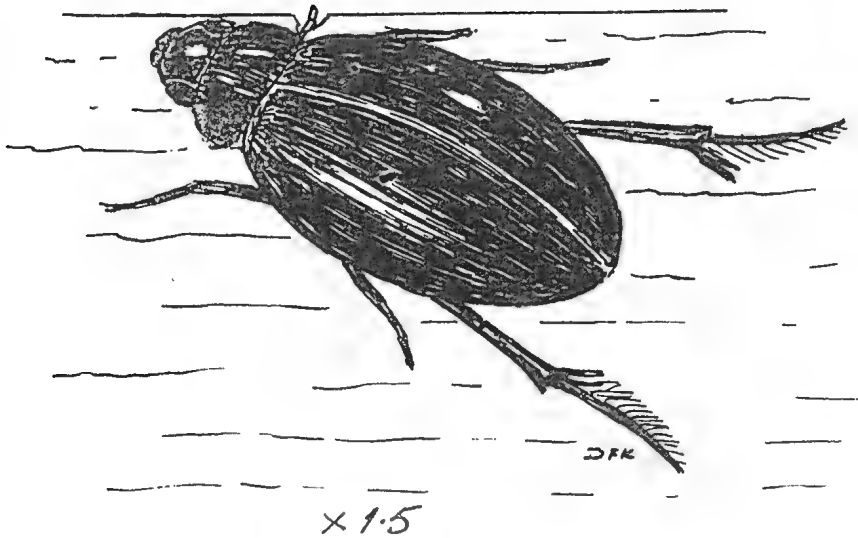
Golden-headed Fantailed Warbler - one seen.

Skylark - four recorded during the weekend.

House Sparrow - five seen, one nest found in saltbush near the north channel into the lagoon.

Starling - a flock of seven seen.

Fig. 1



Great Water Beetle (*Hydrophilus latipalpus*)
replenishing its air supply at the surface.

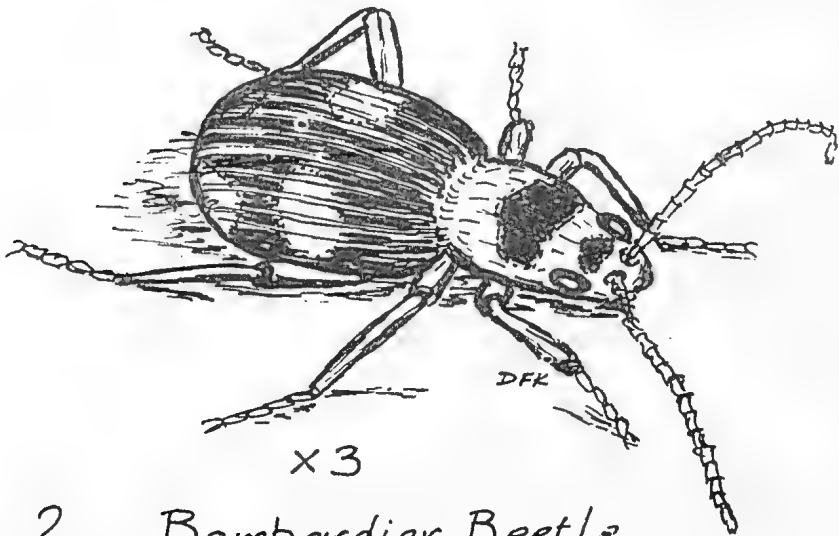


Fig. 2. Bombardier Beetle
(*Pheropsophus verticalis*).

Notes on a Visit to Walwa

BY D. F. KING

For a week's holiday at the beginning of September, 1975 it was decided to visit a part of Victoria that was as yet unknown to me - that is, the North-east corner of the State. So it was planned to take the caravan and make our headquarters at the small, but pleasant township of Walwa, and the park in the camping ground on the banks of the Murray River.

A leisurely journey was made with an overnight stop at Beechworth with time to have a look around the local scene. During this time a total of fifteen bird species were observed as follows:-

Blackbird	Kookaburra
Willie Wagtail	White-winged Chough
White-eared Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Grey Shrike Thrush	Little Raven
Southern Yellow Robin	Whistling Eagle
Superb Blue Wren	White-faced Heron
White-browed Scrub-wren	Red-browed Finch
Crimson Rosella	

The White-eared Honeyeater was obviously in the process of nest building because the specimen was observed to pluck the loose hair from the flank of an unconcerned goat tethered in a backyard. A considerable number of goat's hairs were extracted during this operation.

Arriving at Walwa caravan park we found that we were the sole occupants and would remain so for several days. It was evident that not long before we arrived, possibly a couple of weeks, the whole area had been under the waters of a much swollen Murray River which, fortunately, was still dropping in level. We determined this with some haste, not wishing to awaken in the morning to the sound of water lapping about the caravan door. The river

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NOTES ON A VISIT TO WALWA (continued)

continued to drop throughout the week spent there and with good weather the whole area soon dried out and it turned out to be a very pleasant relaxing spot with wonderful views of the foothills of the Snowy Mountains. One morning we awoke to find that snow had fallen on the upper area of hills behind Walwa, but with a bright sunny morning, it soon disappeared.

Birds of many species were plentiful in and around the site which was ideal, for it had a wide variety of habitat within a relatively small radius; from river and billabong, marsh and river flat, to timber and high country. The following list gives some idea of variety and, no doubt, an expert bird observer would easily have added a great number more -

Eastern Rosella	Mudlark
Red-backed Parrot	Willie Wagtail
Sacred Kingfisher	White-faced Heron
Red-browed Finch	White-necked Heron
Crimson Rosella	Straw-necked Ibis
Magpie sp.	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Blue Wren	Black Duck
Satin Flycatcher	Kookaburra
Little Pied Cormorant	Galah
White-plumed Honeyeater	Yellow-billed Spoonbill
Australian Coot	Brown Tree-creeper
Little Raven	Maned Goose
Restless Flycatcher	Dusky Moorhen
Spur-winged Plover	Little Egret
White Ibis	Black Swan
Darter	Pelican
Southern Yellow Robin	Pied Currawong
Pipit	Grey Fantail
Fork-tailed Swift	Whistling Eagle
Australian Goshawk	Goldfinch
Welcome Swallow	Black Cormorant
Starling	Eastern Shrike-tit
Grey Shrike Thrush	White Egret
Musk Lorikeet	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Flame Robin	White-browed Scrub-wren
Silver Gull	Nankeen Kestrel
Cattle Egret	Swamp Harrier
Black-shouldered Kite	Brown Hawk
Little Grebe	

NOTES ON A VISIT TO WALWA (continued)

Of the many observations made of birds, the behaviour of a flock of Black Swans, ten in number, riding the swift river current in close formation appealed to me the most. Approaching me as I stood on the bank they gradually turned in unison so as to face me, and continued to do so as they passed in front of me and down the river, so that eventually they were travelling backwards for some considerable distance, before again turning, as one, to face their direction of travel. It had all the discipline and precision of a naval 'sail past'.

Another unusual sight was that of a compact flock of White-faced Herons and Little Egrets flying over the river in the late afternoon, without any segregation between the two species possibly heading for their roosting points.

A number of frogs were found in the vicinity of the caravan park. The most common was the Green and Golden Bell Frog (Litoria aurea) found under pieces of debris. They were all darkly coloured greenish brown but on being introduced to the sunlight they began to exhibit shades of brighter green and eventually they adopted the most brilliant colouring normally associated with this species.

Another frog of the family Hylidae found under some rocks was the relatively common Lesueur's Frog (Litoria lesueurii). This specimen was 40 mm long.

Three members of the family Leptodactylidae were also found, the Common Froglet (Crinia signifera), the Spotted Grass Frog (Limnodynastes transmarianensis) and the Red-groined Toadlet (Uperoleia rugosa). The last named was an attractive little frog 25 mm long with a rough dark brown dorsal surface with a central line of tubercles of lighter brown. As its name suggests it had distinct red markings on the upper inside of the thighs. The ventral surface was granular, and the iris of the eye was dark golden. The tops of the eye protuberances were of lighter brown. No webbing was present on the fingers or toes and the tympanum (hearing organ) was indistinct.

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NOTES ON A VISIT TO WALWA (continued)

Two reptiles were found, both lizards. The first was a Water Skink (Sphenomorphus tympanum) in a well-defined burrow under a rock. This specimen was 200 mm in length. The second lizard was found in Guy's Forest, a few miles south of Walwa, under a log in a rain forest area close to a small stream. This specimen was identified by the National Museum as Hemiergis decresiensis. This was a small skink with a dark dorsal surface and a distinctive yellow ventral surface. The limbs are short and diminutive and do not appear to be used when attempting to escape capture, but locomotion was achieved by employing a rapid snake-like oscillation of the body.

The billabong adjacent to the caravan site produced the most interesting insects and other small creatures of the fresh water. A fine specimen of the Great Water Beetle (Hydrophilus latipalpus), Fig. 1, with an overall length of 42 mm was obtained. These beetles are shiny black with a smooth oval form, a distinguishing feature being a large keel-like process mid-ventrally between the 3 pairs of legs. Although not apparent with a casual examination they have wings and are capable of transporting themselves from one body of water to another. The flying wings are folded in an intricate manner beneath hard elytra, or wing cases, that cover the greater part of the dorsal surface. These beetles must obtain their oxygen from the atmosphere and to do so they rise to the surface to pick up air which is then stored in the space between the elytra and abdomen. It uses its antennae to break the surface and conduct the air to the storage space. They feed on algae unlike their larvae who are voraciously carnivorous.

Another interesting beetle was a specimen of the Bombardier Beetle (Pheropsophus verticalis) under a large stone close to the water's edge. This beetle is known to emit a smelly cloud of noxious vapour with an audible "pop" when disturbed, but this specimen failed to do this. This action is probably a defence mechanism. The elytra is black with four yellow spots, the head is yellow with black markings, and the legs and antenna are yellow, Fig. 2. This specimen was 20 mm in length.



JUNIOR PAGES

With spring so close, we will see an increase in the number of birds building nests; magpies, ravens, plovers and a few others will have already built their nests, and be brooding their eggs or small young.

Have you ever considered the wonderful range of nesting materials used by the different birds, and how the places where the birds live, and their way of life, affects their nesting methods?

The Yellow-faced Honeyeater in the photograph on the opposite page uses fine stems of grass and other plants, ties these together with cobwebs and covers the outside with green moss.

In Mr. Baldwin's article (see Page 29) mention is made of several species of hawks and eagles; most build their nests of sticks, but use green gum leaves as lining; kestrels rarely build their own nests, but use hollow trees and deserted nests of other species.

Peregrine Falcons nest in cliffs usually or they may take over the empty nest of another bird - such, as Mr. Baldwin notes, as an old eagles eyrie.

Seabirds usually dig a nest burrow, but gannets make their nests of seaweed, gulls use sticks and feathers, albatrosses build up a mound of earth and terns just scrape a depression in the sand or shell bank.

Taylor-birds sew a leaf or two onto the outside of their tiny nests, mistletoe birds build a lovely purse-like nest of plant-down, pardalotes dig a burrow in the ground and line it with bark strips and finches build a large football shaped nest of grass.

If you find any birds nests this year, look closely to see what materials are used - you will find this a very interesting topic to study.

A LAST WORD

By Trevor Pescott

To charge or not to charge ... that is the question facing the You Yangs Regional Park Committee of Management at the present time. While there is some opposition to the move to make an entrance charge at the You Yangs, we should hear the background behind the recent publicity and the reasons for suggesting a charge before we voice any opposition.

For almost twenty years, the Committee has worked without a set of management regulations, development plan or finance.

Development has been undertaken by the F.C.V., and funded by sporadically available grants, it has been haphazard; despite the efforts of the Committee, boneseed, vandalism, over-use, shooting, uncontrolled traffic and other abuses have continued.

Within the last few years, some sense of control has eventually begun to appear - the present District Forester and Warden (Lloyd Walker and Alan Williams respectively) have done excellent work, and we can see some semblance of order appearing to control the many hazards encountered without any extra funds above normal budget allocations.

Finally, in April this year, the long-overdue regulations were gazetted - and distributed to, amongst others, local State Government members and opposition candidates, and newspapers; one of the regulations, just one in fourteen, says that the Committee may levy admission charges.

No decision has yet been made - but consider the benefits: vehicle entry would be regulated, thus controlling the admission of shooters, off-road vehicles, dogs, cats etc. as happens now at many National Parks (e.g. Wilsons Promontory), people entering could receive advice on fires, parking areas etc., and there would be a steady income to pay for maintenance of the areas most heavily used.

.continued.....

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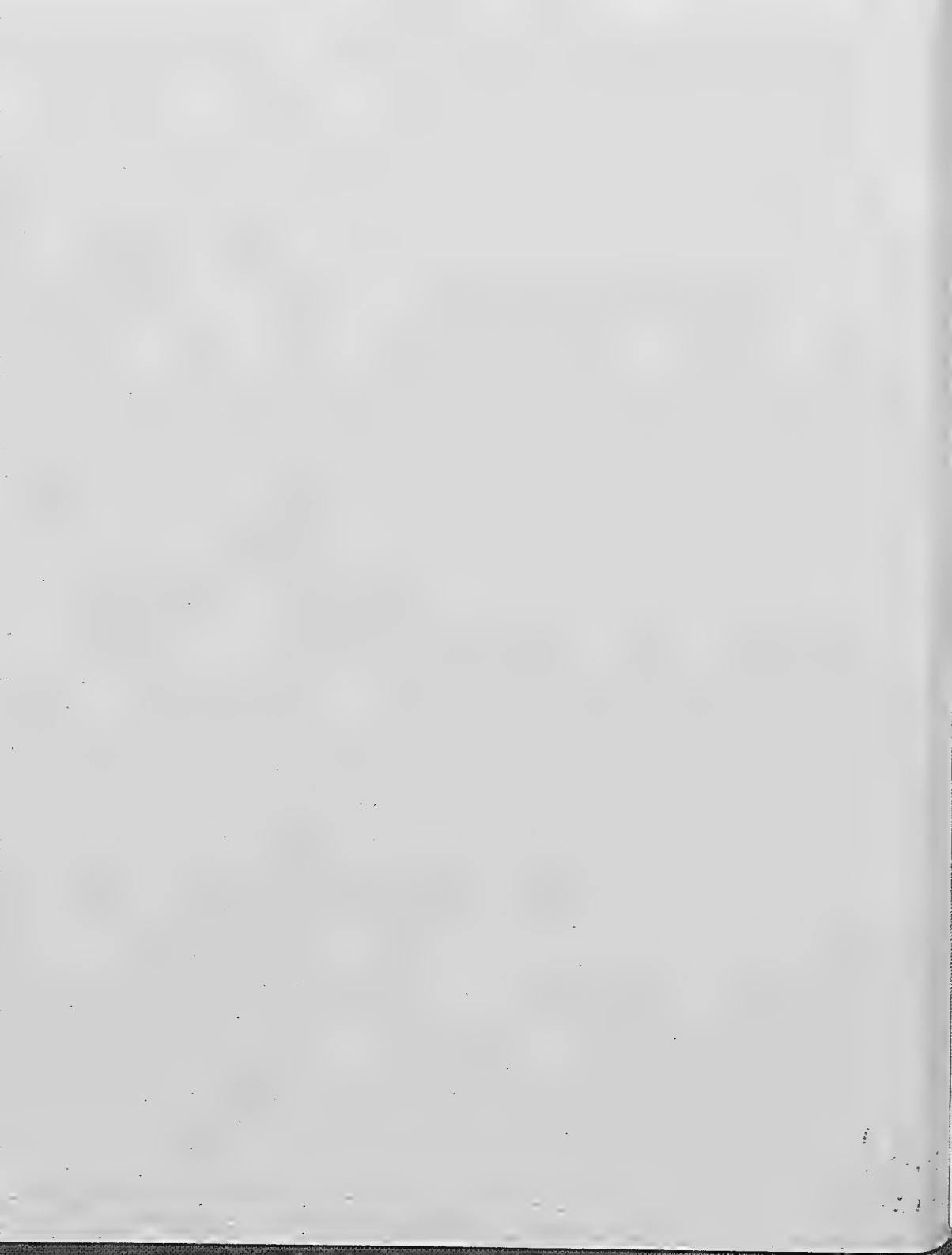
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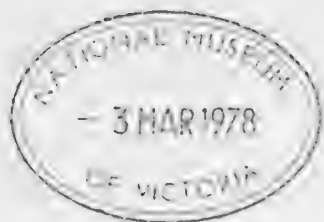
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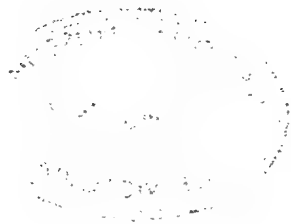
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The Statements and the opinions contained in the papers published in this Journal are the responsibility of the respective authors.

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VICTORIAN RECORDS OF THE LETTER — WINGED KITE

By Roy Wheeler

With the recent invasion of this rare hawk into Victoria, particularly the Werribee District, set me searching for all previous records within the State.

When the first register of the National Museum, Melbourne, was made on May 6, 1865, five skins of the Letter-winged Kite (Elanus scriptus) were in the collection. Three skins came from the Zoological Gardens at Royal Park, one from a professional collector living at Queenscliff and another collected on the Keilor Plains which was possibly the first Victorian record of this species. It was also listed in the first Victorian bird list published in "The Australasian" on December 30, 1865 by W.J.

Isaac Batey writing in "The Emu" Vol. 7, page 3 states that he saw this species at Toolern in 1888 and said it was the rarest of hawks in that area. In this same period G.A. Keartland and A.J. North both reported Letter-winged Kites but gave no dates. Keartland writing on "Birds of Melbourne" in "The Handbook of Melbourne" published in 1900 states: "Birds shot at Brunswick and Oakleigh had their stomachs filled with the remains of mice, lizards and insects". North in his volume of "Nests and Eggs of Birds found breeding in Australia and Tasmania" writes "From Victoria there is an adult male procured by me at Moonee Ponds. It was hovering at dusk in a paddock and had descended now and again to catch field mice, with which the stomach was filled". Sir Charles Belcher in his book "Birds of Geelong" covering the period from 1880 to the early 1900's did not record the species. Mr. Brittlebank in his article on "The Birds of Myrning" in the Victorian Naturalist Vol. 16 (1898) records the Letter-winged Kite.

VICTORIAN RECORDS OF THE LETTER-WINGED KITE (continued)

I can find no further reference to the species until in Donald Macdonald's "Nature Notes and Queries" published weekly in "The Argus" from 1912 to 1930, when a correspondent wrote of a bird seen at Camperdown on February 11, 1916. Mr. Jim Watson a friend of many years and now living at Balwyn, Victoria, wrote me saying that as a boy he remembers seeing a party of Letter-winged Kites north of Camperdown on the Darlington Road in 1920, a showery afternoon with a strong south wind which he now feels could have been late Spring. The next records were during the remarkable hawk invasion into Victoria in 1952 and the two main species involved were the Fork-tailed (Black) Kite and the Black-shouldered Kite. Black Falcons were also reported and several records of the Letter-winged Kites. Mr. Jack Wheeler recorded a bird at Langi Kal Kal on April 22, 1952 and in the same area again on April 30. He also saw one at Rupanyup on April 26, 1952. Other reports that year came from Mr. Ivor Manton at Monageeta, Mr. Harold Tarr at Keilor and Mr. Dudley Dickison at Burwood. The most unusual report for this period was mentioned in "The Emu" Vol. 52 page 280 in "New and Rare Victorian Records" by W.B. Hitchcock of the National Museum, Melbourne who writes: "Letter-winged Kite. B 3967 (skin) ? sex. Orbest, February 5, 1952. This specimen, the eighth on record for the State, was found dead against a fence after a storm; it was roughly skinned and forwarded to Mr. David Fleay, who presented it to the Museum. Several days of very rough weather with high winds in eastern Victoria preceded the finding".

Mr. Graham Pizzey writing in "The Herald" says "The last pair I saw were near Camperdown in the 1950's". In March 1958 Mr. Donald Shanks writing in "The Bird Observer" in May 1958 mentions a pair of the Kites at Woolsthorpe and several seen over the previous few years at Warncourt near Colac. In November 1958 Mr. David Dent recorded a bird at Mystic Park (The Bird Observer April, 1959). Then followed further reports at Dattuck near Wyperfeld National Park on September 26, 1969 by Mr. H.E. Tarr, a pair between Shelford and Mt. Mercer by Mr. Roger Cowley on April 21, 1970 and another near Mildura on August 3, 1970.

It was in July 1970, the year of a very bad mouse plague in the Mallee and other parts, that the first invasion of the Letter-winged Kites into Victoria was reported and I am appreciative to



LETTER-WINGED KITES at Avalon, 1977.

Photo: Trevor Pescott.

VICTORIAN RECORDS OF THE LETTER-WINGED KITE (continued)

Miss Joyce Thomas of Wycheproof for the following details: "In 1970 I saw the first Letter-winged Kites near Wycheproof on June 5, a single bird flew across the road at a convenient height in front of the car. Then in the first week of July, when I was returning along the Calder Highway about 9 km north of Wycheproof I saw some white birds perched in a tree a short distance from the road. I climbed the fence to investigate and they proved to be six Letter-winged Kites, perched low in a needlewood tree and they frequently stretched their wings in a most obliging fashion. When I approached closer they took flight but only quietly circled at no great height, giving me a very good sighting of their distinctive flight pattern. When I walked back to the car they returned to settle in the same tree. The time was 4.30 to 5.00p.m.

"I rang my brother Evan at Barham N.S.W. and he and Mr. Peter Disher came over on Sunday July 5. We went out about midday and searched the locality and finally found a few birds sitting in a box tree about 12 km north of Wycheproof. It was a showery day and once when we were forced to shelter in the car, we saw some more birds perched on a fallen tree. There were fifteen birds in this group and altogether we counted 25 birds. No Black-shouldered Kites were seen with this group although they were plentiful in the district. That same year I saw five white hawks in a tree near Nandaly at the end of March and these also could have been Letter-wings but I failed to investigate". This report was mentioned in "The Bird Observer" of August 1970 and was until this recent invasion the largest number reported together in Victoria. Over the years when preparing bird lists for "The Birds of Victoria and Where to Find Them" now in the hands of Thomas Nelson and should be published 1978-79 I recorded the Letter-winged Kites at such places as Mildura, Mid-Murray District, Wathe State Fauna Reserve, Wyperfeld National Park (1957, 1963 and 1969), Mystic Park, Little Desert National Park, Mansfield, Ballarat, Orbost and Colac. Some of these areas have already been mentioned. The last record prior to the invasion was made by Mr. Bob Carroll of the Gould League at Illowa near Koroit on June 23, 1976 "The Bird Observer" September 1976.

The first report of this recent invasion was from the junior members of the Bird Observers Club when one bird was sighted at

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VICTORIAN RECORDS OF THE LETTER-WINGED KITE (continued)

the Metro Farm Werribee during a weekend camp on December 11 and 12, 1976. It was recorded in "The Bird Observer" No. 543, February, 1977. Next report was in the Melbourne "The Herald" by Graham Pizzey on December 29, 1976. A party from the Dartmouth Dam project sighted a Letter-winged Kite when crossing the Hooker Plateau to West Peak at Mt. Bogong in the mountainous north-east of the State. The bird was sitting on snow-grass tussocks and two of the party walked within five metres of the bird before it flew to a snow pole where the whole party surrounded it before it flew off. In the same article Mr. Pizzey mentioned hearing of a very tame bird on the Flinders Golf Links. Following these December, 1976 reports the kites at the Metro Farm started to build up in numbers. First there were six birds, then eight and then fourteen and on to eighteen and at the end of January the number had passed 40 birds. The largest concentration in the State's ornithological history. Most birds were in a patch of red gums on the Point Wilson Road over Beach Road. They flew when disturbed but only for a short distance and their distinctive under-wing pattern could be seen perfectly. Some Black-shouldered Kites were present in the same area and at times perched with the Letter-wings. Other reports in January came from Ancona in the south-east Strathogie Ranges and from Mallacoota in far eastern Victoria.

In February 1977 birds were reported again at Mallacoota (2), Anakie (3), Torquay (8), Winchelsea (1), Wilsons Promontory (1), Fyansford (1), Phillip Island (3), Pt. Cook (2), You Yangs (2), and at the Metro Farm Werribee a count made by Mr. Fred Smith revealed 80 Letter-winged Kites and 20 Black-shouldered Kites.

In March birds were still at Anakie, Waurm Ponds (9), Peterborough (1), Warrnambool (2), Lismore (8), Leslie Manor (8), Charkefield (6) and Tarwin Lower (8). About 80 birds were still at the Metro Farm.

In April the birds were still at Waurm Ponds, Skipton (5), Carrum Sewage and Edithvale (8) and Newstead (1). Mr. Bennett of Winchelsea on April 27 saw 17 birds arrive from a westerly direction and Mr. Richards of North Geelong reported to Graham Pizzey in "The Herald" of July 14, that whilst rabbiting at "Moolerig" about 80 km from Geelong on the Colac Road in late

VICTORIAN RECORDS OF THE LETTER-WINGED KITE (continued)

April he had seen a migration of from 20 to 30 birds travelling in two's or three's going from north to south. These could have well been the same birds, but it was direct evidence that migration was still in progress.

The peak in numbers at the Metro Farm occurred on May 1, 1977 when from 95 to 100 birds were counted. On May 19 I counted 53 on a brief visit, 30 in the red gums, 15 together on a fallen tree in the sugar gum plantation on the Point Wilson Road and 8 low in a plantation towards the Avalon air-field. Other reports were from Burnt Creek near Beaufort (5) and Tarwin Lower (9).

In June the numbers started to drop considerably at the Metro Farm. Several mud-stained birds were sitting on the ground and a dead bird was found beneath the trees. One at Tarwin Lower was taken by a fox, another at Mornington was found dying in a back yard. Numbers at the Metro Farm had dropped to 17 birds, a bird was reported near Glen Forbes on the Bass River, and one at Leslie Manor, two birds at Darlington and the Carrum birds had all gone by mid-June. It had been the coldest and wettest month for years in Central Victoria.

In July the count at Werribee had fallen to 8 birds. Two were seen at Leslie Manor. On August 7, two birds remained and the following weekend only one very sick bird remained at the Metro Farm. And so the great invasion of the Letter-winged Kites had ended. When will they come again in such numbers? Was it a one-way invasion like the Barn Owls from time to time, Mr. Pizzev and I think so and others agree. But there is always a hope of smaller invasions.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Collins writing in "The Bird Observer" of January 1976 prior to this invasion mention that on February 28, 1972 they saw 16 birds perched in a dead tree near the roadway 30 metres off the road to Point Kirk the same locality as the main group of Letter-winged Kites were found in 1977. They did not flush the birds thinking them to be Black-shouldered Kites. Knowing what we know now they could well have been the Letter-wings. Mr. and Mrs. Collins are from Herne Hill at Geelong and were in England when this invasion occurred. Mr. Don White of Serendip also recorded such a group about two or three years ago

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VICTORIAN RECORDS OF THE LETTER-WINGED KITE (continued)

near Lara. In future it would pay to investigate any group of what appears to be Black-shouldered Kites, it could well be the other.

Finally a brief description of this rare bird of the hawk family. It is about 37-1/2 cm (15 inches) long, and has a wing span of 90 cm (3 feet), is white above, pale grey below, black on the shoulder, pink feet, large ruby eyes in a face most owl-like in appearance. The underwing markings are the diagnostic feature, a black band along the leading edge of the underwing gives the shape of a "w" as it flies overhead or stretches the wing when perched. They are mainly nocturnal feeders.

Mr. Jim Watson and Mrs. Watson watched them all leave on February 8, 1977 at 8.50p.m. (D.S.T.) to move off down the coast for the night hunting. From pellets under the roosting trees the birds were feeding exclusively on mice. In Central Australia their usual habitat, the native rats and mice is their main diet. They breed in colonies and nest in flat stick nests lined with leaves and fur and lay from three to six bluish white eggs with brown and red blotches.

I would like to thank Mr. Graham Pizzey of "The Herald" for his assistance with records, Mr. Rex Buckingham of the Bird Observers Club in supplying me with reports, Mr. Jim Watson, Mr. Fred Smith, Mr. Trevor Pescott, Mr. Jack Wheeler, Mrs. Wagin and many others for their great help, my sincere thanks.

P.S. A pair of Letter-wing Kites by all appearances in good condition was seen at Avalon Air-field on August 22, 1977.

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AUSTRALIAN NATURAL HISTORY**MEDALLIONIST FOR 1977 —****JOHN RUSSELL WHEELER****By J. A. Baines**

John Russell Wheeler was born on 22 April, 1909 at Coleraine in Victoria's Western District, and was educated at the local primary and secondary schools. His occupation for over 20 years was in the Transportation section of the Victorian Railways, and for 29 years in the Dairying section of the Department of Agriculture. This service was interrupted by his participation in World War II, serving in the Middle East and New Guinea, 1940-44, holding the army rank of lieutenant. When living in Ballarat, he became joint founder in 1952 of Ballarat Field Naturalists' Club, of which he was secretary for the first six years, being made a life member in 1958. He began contributing a nature column to 'The Courier' (Ballarat daily newspaper), under the name 'Nature Notes', modestly conducted by 'J.R.W.', which is now in its 20th year, appearing in each Saturday issue.

When he transferred to Geelong, he became a foundation member of the re-formed Geelong Field Naturalists' Club. He was vice-president, 1961-4 and 1976-7, president, 1965-71, and has also held at various times the offices of treasurer, excursion secretary, editor of monthly newsletter, and botany group member.

Birds were Jack's first enthusiasm, and they continue to be a major interest for him. Joining the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union and the Bird Observers' Club in 1950, he has contributed important papers over the years to their respective publications, 'The Emu' and 'The Bird Watcher', and articles from him have also appeared in the Gould League's 'Bird Lover' and 'Survival', 'Geelong Naturalist', 'Bendigo Naturalist', 'Bird Observer', 'Canberra Bird Notes', 'Wildlife in Australia', 'Victorian Naturalist', and 'The Bird Bander'.

Bird banding has taken up many hours of Jack Wheeler's life. Number 24 Bird Bander's A Licence was issued to him in 1955, and is still current. Some of the species he has banded include: Silver Gull

AUSTRALIAN NATURAL HISTORY MEDALLIONIST (continued)

3000, Mutton Birds 5000, Australian Gannets 450, White-faced Storm Petrels 400, Black Swans 700, Banded Plover 500, Spur-winged Plover 500, Gull-billed Terns 50, Giant Petrels 42- and he has even banded one Wandering Albatross! He has taken part in bird population counts at Lake Wendouree, Lake Natimuk, Lake Wallace, Lake Bambruk in Wyperfeld National Park, and Reedy Lake at Leopold, making a complete circuit of each lake. He led the local challenge bird counts for five years, and took part in World Bird Day lists. A special project was his regular visits to the Wedge Light gannetry in Port Phillip Bay, first found to be active in 1966 and gradually building up since then; also regular visits to Fort Island, where an important overflow rookery of the White-faced Storm Petrel exists near the main breeding rookeries of Mud Island near Queenscliff.

Perhaps Jack Wheeler's greatest contribution to conservation is his involvement with the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve, of which he has been chairman of the Committee of Management since its inception in 1968 and continues in that office. This reserve, on land largely left in its original state of native vegetation by the Cuthbertson family, was originally of 200 acres (81 ha) but was expanded to an area of 357 acres (143 ha) by public appeal. Jack Wheeler spends 2-3 days every week in attendance in an honorary advisory capacity, and carrying out plantings and general supervision.

Another of his conservation efforts has been the organization of regular plantings of native trees and shrubs, and excursions for the eradication of boneseed at the You Yangs. From 1963 to 1977 he was a member of the Committee of Management of the You Yangs Forest Park, and in this capacity has worked co-operatively with many members of the Geelong F.N.C. and the Bird Observers' Club. He has taken a leading part in the surveys and submissions for the proposed conservation of Mount Cole Range.

Jack Wheeler conceived the need for and carried out the authorship, of a small book called 'The Care of Sick, Injured, and Orphaned Native Birds and Animals', issued by G.F.N.C. and financed by donations. The book is distributed free of charge, and an initial printing of 20,000 copies has been exhausted.

Jack Wheeler married Trixie Hansen in 1932, and they have two daughters and seven grandchildren.

FUNNY FUNGUS

By Louis N. Lane

At first sight no more than two bulges in the lawn just under the umbrella of a eucalypt, after a few days there emerged two bun-shaped objects, the carunculated texture of their domes reminiscent of the segmented surface of a pineapple. The polygonal areas were fawn, divided from each other by a yellowish, shiny line. There were no ostioles for the release of spores.

When the first fungus was investigated (6th. March) it was seen to be shaped like an air-balloon, hemispherical on top but tapering to a point at the bottom. The inner structure, which broke with a granular fracture, was charcoal black enveloped in a snow-white pithy layer under the rind. It had a bland, sweetish, wholesome odour.

After fourteen days, when the earth-ball was an oval 7cm x 6.3cm standing 5.2cm high, each polygon commenced to curl upward at the edges so that it tended to separate from its neighbours. A deep fissure developed across the crown of the "bun" (24th. March). If the dome was tapped, fine brown dust issued from this crack.

The whole fruit now lifted itself above the short sward, still emitting puffs of spores as it ripened. The rootstock, 2.3cm thick thrust its way upward to a height of 3cm above the ground revealing a slender fruit-stem 1.1cm in diameter.

The burden of the heavy fruit bent the stem over until it appeared the head was trying to bury itself in the earth.

Every day the fissures between the segments widened, showing more dusty, brown stuffing as the crust began to disintegrate (14th. April).



THE "FUNNY FUNGUS"

Photo: Louis Lane.

THE FUNNY FUNGUS (continued)

This was probably a specimen of Scleroderm aurantium, a kind of truffle. It is a parasite, hair-fine roots feeding from another plant.

A most remarkable aspect is that there has never been a prior appearance of it in this suburban garden over the last sixty years. As this year (1976) has been the driest on record, it is tempting to wonder if there is any correlation between drought and the emergence of warty puffballs on the surface of the earth.

Feeding Birds from Plastic Net Bags

By Ira Savage

Four bags hanging from the branches of a Golden Ash tree outside my sunroom window.

The contents are : bread, cakes, occasional cooked vegetables and crystallised honey.

Bird species : White-plumed Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Silvereye (grey backed), Blackbird, Red Wattle-bird, Willie Wagtail, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Starling, Grey Fantail. Indian Turtle Doves and European Song Thrushes fed on the pieces of food which happen to drop to the lawn below.

I was surprised to observe how aggressive the Silvereyes became, against all other birds trying to feed from the same source as themselves. They took complete control of the net bags, much to the disgust of the other birds, and they even fought amongst themselves.

SOME NOTES ON FYANS PARK BIRDS

By Theo Trickett

It has been a pleasure to discover that other people in the area here are busy turning wild birds into suburbanites. For example a family in Camden Road were hand-feeding seven Kookaburras during the October of 1974 and also again late in 1975. They have not re-appeared however.

Also a lady nearby puts out jam-jars and cups of nectar on top of a disused incinerator: the Red Wattle-birds and the Rainbow Lorikeets make good use of the food, and their heads disappear right into the jars. Silvereyes can only use the cups. She also puts out lumps of dripping in an onion bag for the butcherbird.

Neighbours have had Welcome Swallows building over their back door: they were obliged to break the nest as often as it was built because the steps from the back door became very messy with droppings. They also put out nectar for the honeyfeeders.

Two bird visitors not seen before in our garden have been:
Rufous Fantail - on 12th. March, 1977 - playing about among the variegated coprosma, the jasmine, roses, and N.Z. fire-bush. It was about the garden and bird-baths for the whole day. One hopes the three tail-feathers found among the violets next day did not mean that it met an untimely end: although on 16th. March a tiny rufous-tipped feather was found floating on a bird-bath.

Grey Fantail - for a whole day during late February. It was interested in the birdbaths, and the hakea and Grevillea rosemarinifolia.

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BARONGAROOK CAMPOUT (continued)

Wood Duck : one pair overhead.
Mountain Duck : two birds over the area.
Wedge-tailed Eagle : one seen.
Nankeen Kestrel : one bird only.
Brown Hawk : only one seen.
White Cockatoo : over the camp.
Crimson Rosella : several seen in small flocks.
Kookaburra : at least four birds noted.
Grey Fantail : several seen.
Yellow Robin : common in the area.
Golden Whistler : two or three seen.
Olive Whistler : several recorded in the bush.
Grey Thrush : only one recorded, heard calling.
Eastern Shrike-tit : a few seen.
Spotted Quail-thrush : one flushed from near the gravel pit.
Striated Thornbill : a few seen.
Little Thornbill : a small party noted.
Brown Thornbill : very common.
Buff-tailed Thornbill: small flocks, not as plentiful as Brown
White-browed Scrub-wren : six noted. Thornbill.
Blue Wren : common throughout the area.
Orange-winged Sittella : a small party noted.
White-throated Tree-creeper : very plentiful.
Spotted Pardalote : one pair seen.
White-naped Honeyeater : common along the creek.
Brown-headed Honeyeater : fairly common.
Eastern Spinebill : fairly plentiful, feeding on banksia flowers.
Crescent Honeyeater : very common in the area.
Yellow-winged Honeyeater : several feeding on flowering gums.
White-eared Honeyeater : numerous, about 12 seen.
Red Wattlebird : common in some areas, flowering gums.
Goldfinch : a flock of almost 12 overhead.
Grey Currawong : several heard.
White-backed Magpie : two or three overhead.
Little Raven : several heard calling.

MAMMALS: Six species recorded. Seen by roadside - Black Wallaby(4)
Grey Kangaroo(1). Spot-lighting : first night - Ring-tailed
Possum(4); second night - Ring-tailed Possum(2). Trapping : first
night (30 cages) - Bush Rat(4) Dusky Phascogale(1); second night
(28 cages) - Bush Rat(4) Brown Phascogale(3).

OTWAYS CAMPOUT — Mackie Track

By Trevor Pescott

The Club campout was held in fine weather on Mackie Track on the south slope of Mt. Cowley above Garvey Creek, in the Otway Ranges, between 12 and 14 March 1977.

A total of 40 bird species was seen, and six mammals and four reptiles were noted; butterflies were plentiful, particularly Kershaws Xenica.

Glow-worms inhabited the embankment ferns and mosses along the roadside cutting of the Mackie Track, and *Peripatus* was collected at night - see "Geelong Advertiser", March 31 for further details.

BIRDS

Yellow-billed Spoonbill - a flock of six were seen flying over Mt. Cowley.

Boobook Owl - heard calling on each night; one call was rather frog-like in tone.

Gang-gang Cockatoo - a small flock seen.

King Parrot - a flock of five seen near the camp site.

Crimson Rosella - a resident species seen in small numbers throughout the area.

Blue-winged Parrot - several were seen feeding along the edges of the Ridge Road between Benwerrin and Mt. Sabine.

Spine-tailed Swift - a few birds only were seen over the ranges during the weekend.

Grey Fantail - noted in various areas mainly as individuals; feeding in the understorey vegetation.

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OTWAYS CAMPOUT, MACKIE TRACK (continued)

Rufous Fantail - recorded as individuals in several areas around Mt. Cowley.

Satin Flycatcher - a few seen along the Mackie Track beyond the camp area.

Flame Robin - both males and females were recorded feeding along the Ridge Road.

Pink Robin - only one bird, a female, was noted during the weekend.

Rose Robin - several females were seen along the Mackie Track.

Southern Yellow Robin - noted in a few areas.

Golden Whistler - several seen, both males and females were present in the Mt. Cowley area.

Rufous Whistler - noted one near the top of Mt. Cowley, in the partly-cleared area.

Olive Whistler - seen in the gullies and dense forest undergrowth.

Grey Shrike-thrush - seen in several areas, and heard calling frequently.

Eastern Shrike-tit - noted along the Mackie Track, feeding in the tree-tops.

Ground (Mountain) Thrush - only one noted during the weekend.

Brown Thornbill - plentiful, seen in the undergrowth and understorey vegetation.

White-browed Scrub-wren - small numbers seen in dense undergrowth along the roads and tracks.

Superb Blue Wren - also noted in the roadside undergrowth and seen feeding on the road margins.

White-throated Tree-creeper - heard calling frequently over the weekend.

Grey-backed Silvereye - small flocks seen feeding in the undergrowth.



Top: WHITE-BROWED SCRUB-WREN

Lower: GLOW-WORM WEBS BESIDE MACKIE TRACK

Photos: Trevor Pescott

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OTWAYS CAMPOUT, MACKIE TRACK (continued)

White-naped Honeyeater - recorded feeding in the outer foliage of the taller trees, quite plentiful.

Brown-headed Honeyeater - heard and seen in the tallest tree-tops, quite numerous in small flocks.

Eastern Spinebill - individuals noted in several areas around the camp site.

Crescent Honeyeater - the distinctive call of this species makes identification simple; plentiful in the Otways.

Yellow-winged Honeyeater - quite common.

Red Wattlebird - quite common, heard calling and seen in tree-tops.

Beautiful Firetail - only one seen, along Mackie Track.

Red-browed Finch - a small flock seen along the roadside.

Forest Raven - plentiful, identified by its distinctive call.

Pied Currawong - a few seen during the weekend.

MAMMALS

Echidna - only one seen, during Sunday afternoon, crossing the Ridge Road near Mackie Track.

Ring-tailed Possum - spotlighted at night in several areas.

Black Wallaby - noted along the roadside at night and early in the morning.

Brown Phascogale - several recorded, including one heavily infected with ticks.

Bush Rat - one intensively worked-over area of ground beneath ferns below the camp yielded a Bush Rat. One small specimen recorded, and assumed to be of this species, very plentiful otherwise.

Bats - heard calling, and seen flying beneath the tree-tops canopy at night. No indication of species is available.

OTWAYS CAMPOUT, MACKIE TRACK (continued)REPTILES

- Tiger Snake - noted basking along one of the bush track clearings.
- McCoy's Skink - one found beneath a large flat rock.
- Water Skink - several seen in roadside clearings.
- Grass Skink - quite numerous in the grassy clearings.

BIRD NOTES

By Ira Savage

Cattle Egrets (Ardeola ibis)

This species has become an item of news in recent times; numbers appear to be increasing and more are being observed.

On a trip to Port Fairy (Vic.) in May this year (1977), we noted two groups, only paddocks apart. The first group consisted of 70 birds, and the second group consisted of 60 birds. They were feeding around the feet of cows in a dairy herd.

Birds in a Pincushion Hakea (Hakea eucalyptoides)

This tree which has now reached the age of blossoming profusely - this last May and June 1977 - in my front garden attracted many birds during its blossom period. The species which my wife and I have observed are listed below:-

Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Yellow-winged Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Red Wattle-bird, Silvereye (grey backed) and Crimson Rosella.

Blossom buds are reappearing this month (October 1977) on this tree, I hope that more species of bird life will be added to this list at a later date.

AN HOUR COUNT No. 23

— Weipa, North Queensland

By Roy Wheeler

Three hundred and seventy-three years ago the Spanish navigator Luis Voeg de Torres sailed through the Strait that bears his name, Torres Strait between Cape York and New Guinea. The western coast of Cape York - then un-named, was discovered in March 1606 by the Dutch navigator William Jansz in the "Duifken" and he named Duifken Point about 200 km south of the tip of Cape York. Capt. James Cook named Cape York and Endeavour Strait during his historic voyage in 1770. Then came Capt. Flinders in 1802 in his epic voyage around Australia and he named the large bay below Duifken Point, Albatross Bay and remarked on the reddish coloured cliffs surrounding this bay. These reddish coloured cliffs were to make mining history some 153 years later. When H.J. Evans the geologist was asked to make a survey of the area in mid-1955 he found that these reddish cliffs were part of the largest field of bauxite ever discovered. Evans himself was over-whelmed with the size of this bauxite field, enough for 120 years of surface mining from 8 to 30 feet deep and covering thousands of hectares. Almost immediately Comalco started plans to mine this great discovery and the Albatross Bay approaches was one of the most extensive dredging operations ever to take place in Australia and now ships up to 80,000 tons sail up Albatross Bay to the leading pier at Lorim Point. This bauxite is 52 per cent aluminium and is shipped to plants in Australia, Japan, South Africa and many other countries. After the bauxite is mined the top soil is replaced and up to 100,000 native trees and legumes are planted back each year. The Company uses the very latest equipment, huge trucks hauling over 80 tons along the haul roads to the stock piles, the driver in an air-conditioned cabin. Now the mining has shifted from near Weipa across the Mission River to Andoom and a railway line carries trains hauling up to 30 trucks of bauxite each holding

AN HOUR COUNT (continued)

120 tons, between Andoom and Lorim Point. A modern town has been built with hotel-motel, schools, super-market and other shops, swimming pool, bowls and other sport centres and the houses all with delightful tropical gardens. The houses are kept cool with huge fans going night and day and big louvres.

It was during our visit to Cairns in October 1976 that we were invited to visit Weipa, less than two hours flying time away.

Mrs. Wheeler and I flew from Cairns by Fokker on the morning of October 29th. 1976 and were in Weipa for lunch. It was very hot towards the end of our ten days stay the great masses of storm clouds were building up in the north and we had some very heavy rain mostly in the night. The wet season was not far away. We enjoyed our stay very much and our friends took us to many places of interest and we listed 131 species for the trip and a full account of it is in "The Bird Observer" No.543 February 1977.

Most mornings we were driven to a quiet beach area at 6.00a.m. and later called for about 8.30. We did a number of hour counts and enclosed is the best total, a record for the series 39 species. Herewith are the details the birds in order of sighting:

Weipa, North Queensland. November 5, 1976. Sandpit Beach south of Weipa. Mangroves, Mission Bay and coastal scrub. Fine and cool with a northerly breeze. Tide on the ebb. 6.25a.m. to 7.25a.m. Seated beneath a shady tree.

Rainbow Lorikeet, 120; Koel, 2; Pelican, 8; Caspian Tern, 2; Whimbrel, 3; Pied Oystercatcher, 2; Silver Gull, 8; Roseate Tern, 4; Little Egret, 70; White-headed Stilt, 2; Varied Triller, 2; Yellow Oriole, 3; Torres Strait Pigeon, 18; Greenshank, 2; Terek Sandpiper, 1; White Egret, 4; Papuan Cuckoo-shrike, 2; Pied Heron, 12; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, 1; Mongolian Sand-dotterel, 1; Shining Starling, 2; Peaceful Dove, 3; Blue-winged Kookaburra, 2; Red-backed Sea-eagle, 2; Little Black Cormorant, 75; White-breasted Sea-eagle, 2; Rainbow-bird, 8; White-faced Heron, 4; Eastern Curlew, 3; Red-winged Parrot, 6; Burdekin Duck, 3; Grey-tailed Tattler, 1; White Ibis, 1; Helmeted Friarbird, 2; Pied Cormorant, 1; Bar-shouldered Dove, 4; Yellow-breasted Sunbird, 2; Red-necked Stint, 10 and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, 2.

Total 39 species and 400 individuals.

CLUB EXCURSION TO MT. COLE

By Jack Wheeler

The day was fine and warm, and bookings so popular that two buses were necessary. Our first stop was at the Ballarat Botanic Gardens where displays of flowering plants were admired, both in external beds and the two hot-houses; members visited nearby Lake Wendouree and many birds of interest noted. Black Ducks had been nesting and two clutches of ducklings seen; very young Black Swan cygnets with their stately parents were popular, and they were willing enough to accept tit-bits of bread and cake. Several Great Crested Grebes in full breeding plumage were noted and they were undoubtedly already nesting at Convent Corner; two male Musk Ducks were so tame that both accepted food from the hand. Reed Warblers were back in force and several were seen to be carrying nesting material; their song is a joy to hear right throughout their late spring and summer visitation each year. The mournful notes of several Little Grassbirds were also heard but they were difficult to see. Only one Sacred Kingfisher was seen which was unusual as Lake Wendouree is a popular area for this migrant every season.

The run to Mt. Cole via Beaufort gave some indication of the variance of the season, odd good crops were seen but the greater percentage indicated lean times for some farmers. We passed Lake Burrumbeet which is a haunt for Pelicans and Cormorants, but these birds were absent from the northern end of this lake where the cliffs there brought to mind that interesting aboriginal legend associated with "Big Water". The caves in these cliffs were once the home of a witch woman, rather a pretty creature who had legs of the emu; she would stand on the cliffs and attract the attention of passing blackfellows, and when they came near the cliff-edge, she would kick them over to their doom.

CLUB EXCURSION TO MT. COLE (continued)

Beaufort members joined us at the lower picnic ground at Mt. Cole Mt. Buangor Forest Park where we pulled into attractive bushland for lunch, the spacious tables and seating being much appreciated. Our expert bird-nester was not to be outdone and soon Ivan Tiley had a nest lined up, that of a pair of White-naped Honeyeaters building high in the foliage of a Candlebark, almost over the tables where we lunched. With our meal finished, the buses took us further into the bush to the upper car park and we all walked to the waterfall which despite the dryness of the season, provided a picturesque example of cascading water amid a mass of ferns, particularly the Austral King-fern, Todea barbara.

Near the falls were a pair of Grey Fantails feeding three partly feathered young in a crowded nest. Those who chose the long walk back to the lower picnic ground were rewarded in seeing a lovely patch of Cinnamon Bells (Potato Orchid) Gastrodia sesamoides, but not yet in flower, and well down the fern gully were two nests being built by Rufous Fantails, a species we never expected to find there until our three-year survey of Mt. Cole 1969/72. One mass of ground and water ferns intermingled with tree-ferns, covered several acres and would be equal to anything one would experience in the Otways or Gippsland.

Leaving Mt. Cole at 3.15p.m., the buses headed homeward via Stockyard Hill and Skipton, with a brief stop south of Beaufort, to view an unusual natural hole in the base trunk of a Candlebark Gum, one of nature's freaks. Our next stop was at Buln Gherin where at the invitation of Mr. Arthur Beggs, we enjoyed a roam around the homestead ground with native trees and shrubs a delight. It was an opportunity to admire a lovely plantation of Spotted Gums, and the magnificent rose garden in which all were named, even the old fashioned roses that appear to be making a comeback. Nesting were a pair of White-plumed Honeyeaters and Grey Thrushes, the latter with a parent bird sitting on this season's third clutch, and of all places in a sizable flower pot under the back verandah right in line of human activity.

Mr. Jack Wheeler, leader for the day thanked Mr. Beggs and presented him with our latest publications. Mr. Beggs suitably responded and invited us back again at any time. A quick run down to the homestead lake revealed masses of Grey Teal and Mountain

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CLUB EXCURSION TO MT. COLE (continued)

Ducks at the western end, and whilst we were observing, in flew a small flock of seven Black-winged Stilts.

Travelling around the southern shore of wildlife sanctuary, Lake Goldsmith, members were able to see where much bird banding had been accomplished over many years, mainly Silver Gulls and Gull-billed Terns.

The bird list for the day totalled 74 and were as follows in the order of sightings:-

White Ibis, Black-shouldered Kite, Mountain Duck, White-faced Heron, White-necked Heron, Little Raven, White-backed Magpie, Spur-winged Plover, Peewee, Black Cormorant, Goldfinch, Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, Crimson Rosella, Pallid Cuckoo, Starling, Brown Hawk, Pipit, Blackbird, Eastern Swamphen, Coot, Dusky Moorhen, Black Duck (y), Grey Teal, Musk Duck (y), Superb Blue Wren, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Black Swan (y), Great Crested-grebe, Little Grebe, Reed Warbler, Little Grassbird, Little Pied Cormorant, Sacred Kingfisher, Grey Fantail (y), White Cockatoo, Galah, Eastern Rosella, House Sparrow, White-fronted Chat, Welcome Swallow, Yellow-tailed Thornbill, White-naped Honeyeater, Grey Shrike Thrush (n), Long-billed Corella, Golden Bronze Cuckoo, Fantailed Cuckoo, Pied Currawong, Rufous Whistler, Golden Whistler, Red-browed Finch, Eastern Shrike-tit, Eastern Spinebill, White-throated Treecreeper, Mountain Thrush, Satin Flycatcher, Rufous Fantail, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Crescent Honeyeater, White-browed Scrub-wren, Brown Thornbill, Straited Thornbill, Yellow Robin, Flame Robin, Little Thornbill, Straw-necked Ibis, Fairy Martin, Willie Wagtail, Jacky Winter, Black-winged Stilt, Kookaburra, Red Wattle-bird, Red-backed Parrot, Skylark, Australian Songlark.

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FEATHER-TAILED GLIDER, the smallest possum found locally.

Photo: Trevor Pescott.

POSSUMS IN THE GEELONG DISTRICT

At the October Junior Meeting, the Editor described the six species of possums found around Geelong; he used his notes to write this article for Geelong Naturalist.

There are, in Australia, seven main groups of possums, and about 24 different species; included amongst these are two Cuscuses from the north of Australia, Leadbeaters Possum from the Gippsland forests, the Striped Possum, and the quaint little Honey Possum from Western Australia.

All possums are marsupials, which have forward opening pouches; they are mainly tree-dwellers, and either build nests or sleep in hollow trees. Together with kangaroos, koala and wombat, they are diprotodonts - that is they have two main front teeth; in this way they differ from phascogales and others which have "many front teeth" (polyprotodonts).

The six local species are -
Brush-tailed Possum

This is the largest and it is very plentiful particularly where there are big hollow red gum trees.

Ring-tailed Possum

Possibly the most plentiful, being found in bushland, the Otway forests, coastal areas and even in suburban gardens.

Pigmy Possum

A tiny animal also with a long, curled tail; it is quite rare and lives in bushland areas where it may use an empty honeyeater's nest for a home.

Fluffy Glider

The largest of our three glider-possums. Rare, it is found in some areas of the Otways.

Sugar Glider

About the size of a Ring-tailed Possum, it is fairly common in local bush areas including the You Yangs, Inverleigh, Anglesea, Ocean Grove and many other places.

Feather-tail

Another tiny marsupial, smaller even than the Pigmy Possum; it seems to prefer Peppermint bushland. One was found accidentally trapped in a rubbish tin at Anakie.

A LAST WORD

By Trevor Pescott

The Land Conservation Council Proposed Recommendations on use of Public Land in the Corangamite Study Area - which includes the Otway Ranges - were released in September; comments were received up to November 25, the 60 day period required under the Land Conservation Act 1970.

Comments flooded in, for as recent press publicity has shown, the long awaited recommendations on the Otways are, to put it mildly, a disaster.

The Cape Otway National Park sounds great, but it is quite inadequate in size, and one of its express conditions is "controlled" logging for 10 years - a totally unacceptable use of a National Park; the Lorne-Angahook State Park is an Ocean Road cosmetic, for it does little more than ensure a pleasant view inland from the coast.

Hardwood production as recommended will destroy the Otways, for the methods and extent of silviculture are dynamic - we stand to see the Otway forests become timber crops, of very little value to wildlife.

The softwood recommendations are also quite devastating, when a careful analysis of the figures is considered - and note, too, the location of the uncommitted land which is almost invariably abutting a softwood plantation.

And what of the Military Training - it is possible for it to occur "under special circumstances in parks and other recreation and conservation areas"; national parks, wildlife reserves, state parks, all except "Reference Areas" may be used subject to some rather minor conditions of permit approval.

Copies of the initial Report, the Proposed Recommendations and our submissions are in the Club library - if you have not had the opportunity to read them, I am sure that you will find them of great interest.

TREVOR PESCOTT
Hon. Editor.

COMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 1 General Meeting. Mr. R. Mackenzie, "Antarctica".
- 12-13 Camp-out, Otways. Leaders, G. Gayner, T. Pescott.
- 19 Working Bee. Belmont Common.
- 20 Excursion (bus trip), Mt. Cole. Leader, Mr. J. Wheeler.
- 27 Working Bee, You Yangs Saddle.

DECEMBER

- 6 General Meeting. Members' Night.

JANUARY

- 28-30 Camp-out, Mud Island.
- 28-30 Camp-out, Alpine area.

FEBRUARY

- 7 General Meeting. Mr. P. Chaplin, "Baw Baw".
- 19 Excursion, Thompson Creek-Breamlea. Leader, Mr. J. Wheeler.

JUNIOR MEETINGS

- November 1 Flowering eucalypts.
- December 6 Projects and display.
- February 7 Solar System.

Juniors meet from 7.30p.m. to 8.15p.m. at McPhillimy Hall on the first Tuesday in each month. Details from Mr. I. Woodland or Mr. D. King.

OFFICE-BEARERS, 1977-78

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Journal of the
Geelong Field Naturalists
Club

Hon. Editor,
Trevor Pescott,
4 Victoria Terrace,
Belmont, 3216.

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FEBRUARY, 1978

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The Statements and the opinions contained in the papers published in this Journal are the responsibility of the respective authors.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the G.F.N.C. is open to any person interested in Natural History. The 'Geelong Naturalist' is distributed free to all members, and the Club's reference and lending library is available.

Subscription Rates are:	
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BIRDS OF A BERKSHIRE GARDEN

By Jess and Arthur Collins

Our house in the village of Mortimer, which served as our base for a year's stay in England, had many advantages for a bird-watcher. The back garden directly adjoined extensive woodlands, to which we had access by the garden gate. Tall oaks and beeches lined the rear boundary, with a thick understorey of rowan, holly and birch. Further back were tall pine trees and interspersed pine plantations, penetrated by footpaths and bridle-tracks, with the nearest road about a mile away. Although this formed a considerable reservoir of wildlife, birds seemed to be concentrated on the interface between woodland and garden, since we saw many more species and individuals from our back windows than ever we did while walking in the woods.

On arrival in September, we were greeted by the resident Robin, who proclaimed his territory by loud singing from the top of a small garden tree all through autumn and winter until early spring. Throughout the breeding season and the post-breeding moult he was silent, but before we left for home he had started to sing again from the same perch. Whether he and his mate succeeded in raising a family is rather doubtful. Although they were both tame and confiding enough to follow us around the garden, they brought no young to the feeding station as other birds did.

One of our first jobs was to build a bird table near the back windows, where we could sit at breakfast and watch the birds similarly engaged. One morning we counted 22 species in and around the garden before breakfast was over. The main attraction of the table was a hanging basket of peanuts. Lumps of suet hanging on strings were also popular, and a sprinkling of "Swoop" (a proprietary wild-bird seed mixture) completed the fare. We tried containers of "bird porridge" but, just as in our garden at home, they were quickly emptied by Starlings which otherwise were not much in evidence.

BIRDS OF A BERKSHIRE GARDEN (continued)

Our first and commonest visitors were Blue and Great Tits, which delighted us by their acrobatics on the hanging basket and suet lumps. Not so delightful was their habit of pecking a hole in the cap of milk bottles left on the doorstep, in order to suck out the cream. We had read of this behaviour originating in London some years ago and rapidly spreading through the tit population elsewhere, and were interested, if somewhat annoyed, to find it in operation on our own doorstep.

Greenfinches were also common visitors, with Chaffinches and Dunnocks in rather fewer numbers. House Sparrows and Starlings were usually about, but not nearly as dominant in numbers or behaviour as they are in our Geelong garden, being perhaps more subject to competition and predation in their native environment. After the first few weeks, Coal Tits started to appear at the bird table, and through the winter a family of five Long-tailed Tits visited daily. Rooks and Jackdaws arrived promptly when table scraps were put out, dominating and scattering the smaller birds. Woodpigeons appreciated the "Swoop", and in early spring were joined by a pair of Collared Doves, a recent immigrant which has spread all over England in the last few years.

Our most welcome guests were a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers which allowed us to observe their complete breeding cycle. Early in the year we heard and saw the male drumming on a hollow branch and vigorously chiselling into dead wood in search of grubs. Soon afterwards there were two of them flying around the trees, and we realised that we had a mated pair, the male being distinguished by a bright red patch on the nape which is lacking in the female. After some hesitation they came to the bird table, preferring peanuts to other food. By the middle of June they were seen cramming their beaks with nut fragments and flying off into the woods, suggesting the feeding of nestlings. Sure enough, it was not long before two juveniles were seen clinging to tree trunks, and soon afterwards they were brought to the bird table and fed by the parents while gripping the post. By the time we left Mortimer they were fending for themselves and fast losing the bright red caps which distinguish juvenile birds.

A pair of Nuthatches also took food away, but were not seen to bring young birds to the table. These birds, the European equivalent of

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BIRDS OF A BERKSHIRE GARDEN (continued)

our sittellas, had similar feeding habits, being more often seen upside-down than not.

Other birds, such as the Magpie and the brightly coloured Jay, were often seen at the end of the garden but did not venture closer. On two occasions a Green Woodpecker dug for ants on the lawn, the second time close to the back window, giving us a good view of its exceptionally long tongue in action. A tree-creeper was seen spiralling up a trunk on several occasions, very like our white-throated species but smaller. Thrushes and Blackbirds were usually to be seen in the garden, and on rare occasions Goldfinches and Bullfinches. A wren was sometimes seen, but usually skulked in thick cover. The Pied Wagtail, a bird of more open country, occasionally visited the garden, though we saw it more often on the roadway in front of the house.

Toward the end of the year, with hard weather approaching, the rowans and hollies bore a bountiful crop of red berries which attracted not only the resident thrushes and Blackbirds but the migrating Missel Thrushes and Redwings. With the first snowfall in January the bird table really came into its own, with 20 to 30 small birds flying around and squabbling over the food. So many people in England put out food for wild birds that a much larger population must be sustained than would be possible without this aid, particularly the small insect-eaters which are most vulnerable in winter.

Spring brought some new birds, including Swallow, Swift and House Martin, all of which were starting to migrate south when we first arrived. It also resulted in diminishing numbers at the bird table as food became more plentiful and the need for nesting territories required some dispersion. Bird-watching became more difficult as the trees developed into full leaf, though there were still some surprises, as when a heron flapped slowly past our bedroom window. Altogether we saw and identified 33 species from our windows, a greater total than our Geelong garden can boast. Two more species were heard only. The Cuckoo, seen often enough elsewhere, called monotonously from the shelter of the trees at the end of the garden, and on frosty winter nights the mournful two-note call of the Little Owl was heard from the woods.

BIRDS OF A BERKSHIRE GARDEN (continued)

Apart from birds, the Grey Squirrels chasing each other through the bare branches of the winter trees and making long leaps from one tree to another were a pleasure to watch, despite their reputation as a foreign interloper and a general pest. One night in spring, a vixen was heard screaming to her mate, and on another night a rutting stag was heard roaring in the woods.

Whether we were confined to home by snow-blocked roads or icy conditions, or merely resting up between trips to other localities, our garden birds were a never-ending source of pleasure and interest, and we were happy indeed to have had a share in maintaining the stock of wild birds through the hard days of winter. We were not alone in this, as our neighbours on both sides kept bird tables, so that our birds would not go hungry when we left.

* * * * *

MATERIAL NEEDED

The success of "Geelong Naturalist" in the future will depend on the continued supply of material from Club Members.

Since we are to move into a new format with Volume 15 we can look towards a more "professional" presentation with a wider distribution. The essence of "Geelong Naturalist" is local natural history, local observations and so on; in the past we have had some excellent material published. Let us ensure that this continues and increases, to give our journal the widespread acceptance it deserves.

* * * * *

TURTON'S TRACK CAMPOUT

By Glenn McCarthy and Geoff Taylor

Turton's Track Campout (near the head of Wild Dog Track) -
12th. - 13th. November, 1977. Weather - fine and mild.

<u>Bird Species Noted.</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Boobook Owl	Two heard calling.
Crimson Rosella	Several groups.
Blue-winged Parrot	One.
Fantailed Cuckoo	Few heard calling.
Horsfield Bronze-cuckoo	Few heard calling.
Golden Bronze-cuckoo	Few heard calling.
Grey Fantail	Fairly common.
Rufous Fantail	Few.
Rose Robin	Two.
Yellow Robin	Common.
Golden Whistler	Common - very vocal.
Rufous Whistler	One heard.
Olive Whistler	One pair only.
Grey Thrush	Fairly common.
Eastern Shrike-tit	Few.
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	One overhead.
Black Bird	Two.
Ground Thrush	One.
Brown Thornbill	Very common.
White-browed Scrub-wren	Common.
Blue Wren	Common.
White-throated Tree-creeper	Common.
Spotted Pardalote	Few heard calling.
Striated Pardalote	Few heard calling.
Eastern Silvereye	Fairly common.
White-naped Honeyeater	One small party.
Brown-headed Honeyeater	Several parties.



PIED CURRAWONG

Photo by Trevor Pescott

TURTON'S TRACK CAMPOUT (continued)

<u>Bird Species Noted</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	One.
Crescent Honeyeater	Common.
Pied Currawong	Fairly Common.
Forest Raven	Few overhead.

N.B. Majority of birds recorded were recorded by their calls, as sightings were made difficult because of the dense undergrowth.

Mammal Report

There were thirty-one live catch traps set on one night; in these a total of 13 mammals were caught, examined and then released.

Bush Rats (Rattus fuscipes) eleven.
Swamp Rat (Rattus lutreolous) one.
Dusky Phascogale (Antechinus swainsonii) one.

It was of particular interest that the Swamp Rat and phascogale were trapped during the daylight hours, after the traps had first been checked in the early morning.

This is possibly because, with such a large population of Bush Rats, the rarer mammals may not have a chance of entering the traps until after the Bush Rats have ceased their night activity.

There were no mammals recorded spotlighting, other than the occasional flighty bat.

Even with the lack of mammals, our walk was not in vain, as the delightful chemo-phosphorescent light of the glow-worms were sighted along the steep banks edging the road.

Reptiles

There were few seen. Tiger snake and one small species of skink were found sunning themselves in the clearing of the track. The skink was identified as Leiolopisma entrecasteaux.

Amphibians

Frogs seemed to be very vocal in the evening, probably after the recent rain. Frogs found were - Brown Tree Frog and Geocrinia victoriana.

FENNEL, AN AROMATIC ROADSIDE WEED

By Trevor Pescott

Fennel (Foeniculum vulgare) is an introduced plant which now grows as a weed in many parts of Southern Australia; it also grows in other temperate regions of the world.

It is a native of Europe and western Asia and it made its appearance in Victoria as a garden escapee over 90 years ago.

Now a "declared" noxious weed, it seems to thrive on roadsides and damp wasteland areas generally.

Much information I have comes from a useful book "Noxious Weeds of Victoria" by Parsons, and I am grateful for help in locating other references by members of the botany group. My introduction to Fennel came many years ago when it was described as the nesting site of Reed Warblers along the Yarra River in suburban Melbourne. It was identified then as "fennel, often misnamed aniseed because of the strong smell of its leaves".

Parsons records two alternative names as Aniseed and Dill which "are unfortunate alternatives as both apply to other plants". Fennel belongs to the botanical family called Umbeliferae which contains over 200 genera and more than 2700 different plant species. Most are herbs growing as annuals or perennials, and include well known vegetables as celery, carrot, parsnip and parsley.

One species known as Florence Fennel is grown commercially as a herb. It seems likely that the common Fennel was first grown in Melbourne as a cooking garnish or perhaps because of the medicinal properties ascribed to it in ancient times.

Another plant which is related to Fennel is Hemlock, a herb which gained notoriety because of the poison extracted from it. It is a

.....continued on page 109

BIRDS SEEN ON A TRIP TO THE GULF

By Glenn McCarthy

The following bird list was compiled during a trip of one month duration, to Karumba, on the Gulf, in July 1976 - camping throughout. The route was through Echuca, Booligal, Mt. Hope, Burke, Cunamulla, Longreach, Winton, along the 400 mile loop road through Bealea to Mt. Isa, then on to Cloncurry, Normanton to Karumba. Several days were spent camped on the coast, a few miles east of Karumba. For several more days we camped beside the Walker River about 15 miles inland; this was possibly the best bird area on the trip. The road back was via Julia Creek, Kyuna, Winton, Barcardine, Emerald, Springsure, Rolleston to Carnarvon Gorge, where heavy rain was encountered. A week was spent at Carnarvon before we were able to travel out over the miles of muddy dirt roads to Roma. The Piliga Scrub was visited, too briefly, on the way to Coonabarabran and home.

Note has been taken of the number of Wedge-tailed Eagles recorded throughout the trip - the total was 26 individuals.

<u>Species of bird</u>	<u>States Recorded</u>			<u>Remarks</u>
	<u>Vic.</u>	<u>N.S.W.</u>	<u>Qld.</u>	
Emu		*	*	Moderately common N.S.W. and Queensland.
Little Grebe		*	*	Small parties on isolated lagoons.
Australian Pelican			*	A few seen around Norman River Gulf.
Black Cormorant		*		Common N.S.W. water courses.
Little Black Cormorant		*	*	Common throughout N.S.W. Qld. water courses.
Pied Cormorant		*	*	A few found on main rivers.
Little Pied Cormorant		*		Common along Darling River.

BIRDS SEEN ON A TRIP TO THE GULF (continued)

<u>Species of Bird</u>	<u>States Recorded</u>			<u>Remarks</u>
	<u>Vic.</u>	<u>N.S.W.</u>	<u>Qld.</u>	
Australian Darter		*	*	Common throughout water courses.
White-necked Heron	*	*	*	Common wherever water.
White-faced Heron	*	*	*	" " "
Mangrove Heron			*	Gulf only - observed at low tide.
White Egret		*	*	Water courses & lagoons.
Plumed Egret			*	Gulf only, isolated birds only.
Little Egret			*	" " " "
Nankeen Night-heron		*	*	Common Darling(N.S.W.) and Gulf.
Jabiru Stork			*	Isolated birds on Gulf lagoons.
White Ibis		*		Darling River.
Straw-necked Ibis		*		Darling River and nearby dams.
Royal Spoonbill		*		Isolated lagoons.
Yellow-billed Spoonbill		*	*	Water courses - fairly common.
Black Swan	*	*	*	Seen throughout, common Vic.
Mountain Duck	*			Some pairs on Vic. dams.
Burdekin Duck			*	Walker River "Gulf".
Black Duck	*	*	*	Common throughout.
Mallard Duck	*			Victorian dams.
Grey Teal		*	*	Common along most water courses.
Chestnut Teal			*	One in mob of Grey Teal.
Hardhead		*		Some pairs seen along water courses.
Maned Goose	*	*		Common dams, swamps and lagoons.
Black-shouldered Kite	*	*	*	Throughout.
Black Kite		*	*	Common, observed in large parties.
Whistling Kite		*	*	Common.
Square-tailed Kite		*	*	Rare, seen in open country.

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BIRDS SEEN ON A TRIP TO THE GULF (continued)

<u>Species of Bird</u>	<u>States Recorded</u>			<u>Remarks</u>
	Vic.	N.S.W.	Qld.	
Brahminy Kite			*	Pair on Gulf's coast.
Brown Goshawk		*		Isolated.
Wedge-tailed Eagle	*	*	*	Observed feeding on roadsides. Total 26.
White-breasted Sea-eagle			*	Gulf only - nesting.
Spotted Harrier			*	Barkley Tablelands (rare).
Swamp Harrier		*		Crops N.S.W.
Osprey			*	Gulf only.
Peregrine Falcon			*	Gulf only.
Grey Falcon			*	Mountains bordering Mt. Isa (carrying snake).
Nankeen Kestrel	*	*	*	Common throughout.
Brown Hawk	*	*	*	Common throughout.
Little Quail			*	Small party - Barcoo River.
Brolga			*	Common - Gulf country.
Banded Landrail			*	Pair Carnarvon Gorge.
Dusky Moorhen			*	Lagoons - Gulf.
Eastern Swamphen	*	*		Swamps throughout.
Coot	*	*	*	Seen throughout.
Australian Bustard			*	Common on plains.
Pied Oystercatcher			*	Gulf only - low tide.
Spur-winged Plover	*	*		Common in south.
Banded Plover			*	Isolated pairs and small parties.
Black-fronted Dotteral			*	Gulf's lagoons, small parties.
Eastern Curlew			*	Gulf - low tide.
White-headed Stilt			*	Gulf - large numbers at low tide.
Australian Pratincole			*	South of Mt. Isa - 4.
Silver Gull	*		*	Not recorded inland.
Whiskered Tern			*	Inland lagoons.
Caspian Tern			*	Gulf - Coast - uncommon.
Roseate Tern			*	Common - Gulf.
Little Tern			*	Common - Gulf.
Domestic Pigeon	*			Observed over townships.

BIRDS SEEN ON A TRIP TO THE GULF (continued)

<u>Species of Bird</u>	<u>States Recorded</u>			<u>Remarks</u>
	Vic.	N.S.W.	Qld.	
Bar-shouldered Dove			*	Group- Walker River- Gulf.
Peaceful Dove		*	*	Common in bush areas.
Diamond Dove			*	Common in bush areas border- ing water courses.
Common Bronzewing		*		Pilliga Scrub - 1 pair.
Crested Pigeon	*	*	*	Common throughout.
Plumed Pigeon			*	Spinifex country of north.
Wonga Pigeon			*	Carnarvon Gorge - 2.
Rainbow Lorikeet			*	Common in Gulf feeding on Grevilleas. Common also at Carnarvon.
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet			*	Carnarvon - small parties.
Musk Lorikeet			*	Carnarvon.
Little Lorikeet			*	Carnarvon.
Red-tailed Black Cockatoo			*	Gulf Country.
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo		*	*	Scattered parties.
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo		*	*	Scattered parties.
Little Corella			*	Seen feeding with Sulphur- Crested Cockatoos.
Galah	*	*	*	Common throughout.
Cockatiel		*	*	Common wherever water.
Red-winged Parrot			*	Gulf country - uncommon.
King Parrot			*	Carnarvon - pairs.
Crimson Rosella	*			Small parties in south.
Eastern Rosella	*	*		" " " "
Pale-headed Rosella			*	Throughout central Qld.
Ring-necked Parrot		*	*	Throughout Mallee country.
Red-backed Parrots	*	*	*	Scattered parties.
Blue Bonnet		*	*	" "
Mulga Parrot		*	*	" "
Budgerigah			*	Common wherever water.
Fan-tailed Cuckoo			*	Carnarvon.
Golden Bronze-cuckoo			*	"
Horsfield Bronze-cuckoo			*	"
Little Bronze-cuckoo			*	Rare - Gulf. One only.
Pheasant Coucal			*	Carnarvon.

BIRDS SEEN ON A TRIP TO THE GULF (continued)

<u>Species of Bird</u>	<u>States Recorded</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
	Vic. N.S.W. Qld.	
Boobook Owl	*	Gulf - isolated birds.
Barn Owl	*	" " "
Azure Kingfisher	*	Pair, Walker River, Gulf.
Laughing Kookaburra	* *	Isolated birds.
Blue-winged Kookaburra	*	Walker River, Gulf. Party.
Red-backed Kingfisher	*	Fairly common - water.
Sacred Kingfisher	*	" " "
Mangrove Kingfisher	*	Gulf mangroves.
Rainbow-bird	*	Walker River, Gulf.
White-backed Swallow	*	Darling.
Welcome Swallow	* *	Common throughout.
Tree Martin	*	Isolated parties.
Fairy Martin	*	Water courses - common.
Australian Pipit	* *	Common throughout.
Ground Cuckoo-shrike	*	Isolated pairs.
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	*	Common throughout.
Little Cuckoo-shrike	*	Small parties - pairs.
White-winged Triller	*	Isolated birds.
Chestnut Quail-thrush (Rufous Throated) Grey	*	One Pilliga Scrub.
Crowned Babbler	*	Scattered parties.
Grey-crowned Babbler	*	" "
White-browed Babbler	*	" "
Golden-headed Fantailed Warbler	*	Gulf - parties.
Brown Songlark	*	Few over grasslands.
Rufous Songlark	*	Pair north Mt. Isa spinifex.
Superb Blue Wren	* *	Common in south.
Blue and White Wren	* *	Common along fence lines. Salt bush.
Purple-backed Wren	*	Stony country- spinifex.
Red-backed Wren	*	Carnarvon - small parties.
White-throated Warbler	*	Small parties Gulf, Carnarvon.
Mangrove Warbler (Cantator)	*	Common Gulf's mangroves.



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GEELONG FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

To all Members,

FIELD STUDIES AND SURVEYS

As well as the need for more surveys and studies to increase our own knowledge, we are receiving requests for advice and information from Councils, Government Departments etc. We should be able to provide the answers, especially for public land.

If you are willing and able to voluntarily assist the Club, please provide details as listed below.

NAME:.....
ADDRESS:..... Post Code.....
PHONE NO. Home..... Work.....

The time I am best able to help is: (Tick your preference)

- During week days.
- During week day evenings.
- On the weekend.
- Other. (please specify)

Birds

Mammals

Recording

Newspaper clipping of relevant items

Reptiles

Insects

Filing

Botany

Marine

Typing/Copying

Other (please specify)

This work (it can be fun too) does not necessarily require expertise although it helps. It is voluntary. It is a good way to learn. You will contribute more to, and get more from, your Club membership.

Please hand or post to the Secretary, Geelong Field Naturalists Club.



THE PERIPATUS (photograph above by Trevor Pescott)
was caught in the Otways in March 1977.
For more details see pages 110 and 111
of this issue.

BIRDS SEEN ON A TRIP TO THE GULF (continued)

<u>Species of Bird</u>	<u>States Recorded</u>		<u>Remarks</u>
	Vic.	N.S.W. Qld.	
Striated Thornbill		*	Carnarvon.
Little Thornbill	*	*	Carnarvon - common.
Brown Thornbill		*	Small parties - Pilliga scrub.
Chestnut-tailed Thornbill	*	*	Common throughout dry scrub.
Yellow-tailed Thornbill	*	*	" " "
Buff-breasted Scrub-wren		*	Carnarvon - common.
Yellow Weebill		*	Common throughout.
Eastern Whiteface		*	" "
White-fronted Chat		*	Small parties - saltbush.
Jacky Winter	*	*	Common throughout.
Scarlet Robin	*		Common in south.
Red-capped Robin		*	Seen throughout scrub area.
Rose Robin		*	Carnarvon - one pair.
Hooded Robin		*	Common dry areas.
Southern Yellow Robin	*	*	Common in south.
Northern Yellow Robin		*	Carnarvon.
Grey Fantail		*	Common.
Willie Wagtail	*	*	Very common throughout.
Leaden Flycatcher		*	Walker River, Gulf.
Satin Flycatcher	*	*	Carnarvon.
Restless Flycatcher		*	As far north as the Gulf.
Golden Whistler	*	*	Scattered.
Rufous Whistler		*	"
White-breasted Whistler		*	Gulf - mangroves.
Grey Shrike Thrush	*	*	Throughout.
Crested Bell-bird		*	Drier Mallee areas.
Orange-winged Sittella		*	Carnarvon.
White-headed (Pied) Sittella		*	" - small party.
Black-capped Sittella	*	*	Pilliga scrub.
Brown Tree-creeper		*	Fairly common in bush areas.
White-browed Tree-creeper		*	One pair seen near Charlie-ville.
White-throated Tree-creeper	*		
Mistletoe Bird		*	Mnt. Ida Vic. Throughout Qld. (common Carnarvon).

BIRDS SEEN ON A TRIP TO THE GULF (continued)

<u>Species of Bird</u>	<u>States Recorded</u>		<u>Remarks</u>
	Vic.	N.S.W. Qld.	
Striated Pardalote	*	*	Common.
Black-headed Pardalote		*	Common in north.
Spotted Pardalote		*	A few Carnarvon.
Grey-breasted Silvereye		*	Carnarvon in small parties.
Yellow Silvereye		*	Common in Gulf country.
Brown Honeyeater		*	Throughout central Qld. to Gulf.
Striped Honeyeater	*	*	Throughout, single sightings only.
Scarlet Honeyeater		*	Parties Carnarvon Gorge.
Black Honeyeater		*	Recorded once in Gulf.
Rufous-throated Honeyeater		*	Small party Walker River Gulf.
Lewin's Honeyeater		*	Carnarvon, fairly common.
Singing Honeyeater	*	*	Throughout.
Yellow-faced Honeyeater		*	Carnarvon, fairly common.
White-eared Honeyeater		*	Carnarvon, feeding on grass and tree blossom.
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater		*	" " "
White-plumed Honeyeater*	*	*	Common throughout, except far north.
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	*		Pilliga Scrub.
Yellow-fronted Honeyeater		*	Walker River, Gulf.
Yellow-tinted Honeyeater		*	Walker and Flinders Rivers, Gulf.
Yellow Honeyeater		*	Walker River, Gulf.
White-naped Honeyeater *		*	Parties Carnarvon, common in south.
White-throated Honeyeater		*	Walker River, Gulf.
Golden-backed Honeyeater		*	" " "
Brown-headed Honeyeater		*	Carnarvon, small parties.
Eastern Spinebill		*	"
Noisy Miner	*		South of Bourke.
White-rumped Miner	*	*	Throughout - common.
Red Wattle-bird. *	*	*	Common in south.
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	*	*	Small parties.

BIRDS SEEN ON A TRIP TO THE GULF (continued)

<u>Species of Bird</u>	<u>States Recorded</u>			<u>Remarks</u>
	Vic.	N.S.W.	Qld.	
Blue-faced Honeyeater			*	Central Queensland-common.
Noisy Friarbird			*	" " " "
Little Friarbird		*	*	Common in Mallee areas.
Diamond Firetail Finch		*		Mt.Hope; one sighting only.
Zebra Finch			*	Common in north (water).
Banded Finch		*	*	" " " "
Red-browed Finch			*	Carnarvon - parties.
House Sparrow	*	*	*	Throughout - very common in south.
Tree Sparrow	*			A few in south.
Goldfinch	*			Small parties.
Starling	*	*		Common throughout.
Indian Myna	*			Suburbia.
Olive-backed Oriole			*	Gulf - single sightings.
Spangled Drongo			*	Walker River, Gulf - two.
Magpie-lark	*	*	*	Common throughout.
White-winged Chough	*	*	*	Bush bordering water course
Apostle Bird		*	*	Common in north. in towns.
White-breasted Wood-swallow	*	*		Small parties.
Black-faced Wood-swallow	*	*		Common throughout north.
Dusky Wood-swallow		*		Mixed with Black-faced.
Little Wood-swallow			*	Parties in north.
Pied Currawong			*	Very common at Carnarvon.
Grey Currawong	*			A few in south.
Pied Butcherbird		*	*	Fairly common in drier areas.
Grey Butcherbird			*	One recorded central Qld.
Black-backed Magpie		*	*	Common throughout north.
White-backed Magpie	*	*		Common in south.
Spotted Bower-bird			*	One central Queensland.
Great Bower-bird			*	A few in Gulf (bower also found).
Australian Raven	*	*		Fairly common.
Little Raven	*			A few in south.
Australian Crow			*	Fairly common in north.

AN HOUR COUNT No. 24 — FYSHWICK, A.C.T.

By Roy Wheeler

Canberra the National Capital is most famous for Parliament House which was opened on May 9, 1927 by the then Duke of York (later to become King George VI). On April 13, 1977 an 18 cent stamp was issued to commemorate the 50th anniversary of this occasion.

Canberra's history however goes back to the 1840's when the Church of St. John the Baptist was begun in 1841. Records on its tombstones and other memorials tell much of the early history of the area. Blundell's farmhouse built in 1858 by pioneer Robert Campbell for his ploughman still stands near Lake Burley Griffin, is of historical interest as is Lanyon on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River near Tharwa.

Besides Parliament House there are many other buildings of note such as the Royal Military College, Duntroon; Government House; the Royal Australian Mint; Australian National University; National Library of Australia; Australian War Memorial; the Prime Minister's Lodge; over 50 foreign Embassies; Mt. Stromlo Observatory; Australian Academy of Science and many others.

Canberra is the fastest growing city in Australia and the new districts of Woden, Bellconnen and Tuggeranong are spreading fast. Now our son Ken and his wife and three young children live in the A.C.T., Mrs. Wheeler and I visit them as often as possible. Our favorite bird spots are the Botanic Gardens, Dairy Road at Fyshwick, along the Murrumbidgee River, Lake Burley Griffin, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and Black Mountain.

We have from time to time made hour counts in and around the A.C.T. and our top count to date has been made in Dairy Road, Fyshwick. The idea of the hour count is to sit in one place for an hour and

AN HOUR COUNT No.24 (continued)

record every bird seen and heard within binocular range. Try it some time. Herewith are details of two counts made over the same area one in summer and the other in winter.

Fyshwick, A.C.T. Overlooking Kelly's Swamp, Jerrabomberra Creek and the Molonglo River from Dairy Road. November 28, 1976. Fine and sunny with some cloud. 3.50 to 4.50p.m. Birds in order of sighting:

White-faced Heron, 12; White Egret, 8; Little Egret, 1; Spurwinged Plover, 2; Black Duck, 100; Reed Warbler, 4; Dusky Moorhen, 30; Swamphen, 50; Coot, 8; Little Grebe, 1; Goldfinch, 20; Grey Teal, 50; Little Pied Cormorant, 6; Little Black Cormorant, 8; Black-shouldered Kite, 2; Skylark, 2; Little Grassbird, 2; House Sparrow, 3; Superb Blue Wren, 6; Cattle Egret, 3; Royal Spoonbill, 1; White Ibis, 1; Silver Gull, 10; Black Swan, 2; Black Cormorant, 3; Rock Dove, 6.

Total 26 species and 331 individuals.

Count No.2 in the same area:

Fyshwick, A.C.T. Same area as previous count. July 31, 1977.

Fine and cool and sunny after early frost and fog. Swamp water very low. 11.15a.m. to 12.15p.m. Birds in order of sighting:

Swamphen, 50; Dusky Moorhen, 20; Black Duck, 12; Grey Teal, 30; Goldfinch, 4; Galah, 6; Magpie Lark, 2; Black-backed Magpie, 2; Raven, 8; Blue-winged Shoveler, 20; Hardhead, 4; Superb Blue Wren, 2; Little Pied Cormorant, 2; Little Grebe, 3; Mountain Duck, 2; Black Cormorant, 4; Pipit, 1; Black Swan, 2; Coot, 6; Rock Dove, 6; Nankeen Kestrel, 1; Starling, 6; Skylark, 2; Swamp Harrier, 2; Spotted Harrier, 1; Little Black Cormorant, 1; White-faced Heron, 2; Black-shouldered Kite, 1; Hoary-headed Grebe, 4.

Total 29 species and 202 individuals.

BIRDS OF PREY IN THE GEELONG DISTRICT — WHISTLING KITE AND LITTLE EAGLE

By Trevor Pescott — reprinted from 'By Field
and Lane', Geelong Advertiser, 15th December, 1977

The Whistling Kite, one of our largest birds of prey, has declined in numbers throughout the Geelong district over the last decade. Why this should have occurred poses an interesting question.

Perhaps a clue lies in an article written by Mr. J. Wheeler and published in the Geelong Naturalist journal in May 1974. Mr. Wheeler, in his article, recorded the discovery in 1968 of a kite at Edwards Point, near St. Leonards, which displayed all of the symptoms of pesticide poisoning.

The Whistling Kite is largely a scavenger, and, as a result, it may have been feeding on food contaminated with chemicals used in insect or rabbit poisoning. The side effects of 1080 poison, for example, are largely known, although it is a chemical used widely in rabbit control - and the destruction of other "pest" animals.

Rabbits are now a primary food supply of Whistling Kites and many other birds of prey. This is not a recent trend, for Charles Belcher in his book "Birds of the District of Geelong, Australia" (published about 1914) wrote about the Whistling Kite - "One February ... I saw about 25 of these cumbersome hawks in about a mile's journey (near Marcus Hill). It is possible they were after poisoned rabbits; they are great eaters of carrion, and rarely do harm to anything living... They are inoffensive, sluggish creatures."

In Western Australia, it was noticed that in the 1920's, there was an increase in egg-clutch size in many birds of prey, this corresponding with the explosion in rabbit numbers.

BIRDS OF PREY IN GEELONG DISTRICT (continued)

Most animals can regulate their populations to fit the environment, by increased fecundity in good times and a decline in breeding in the poor years.

During the 1950's, my own observations on the Whistling Kite showed their tendency to gather into large autumn flocks, and on occasions I noted up to 30 birds over the Barwon Heads - Black Rocks beach area. I did not notice their feeding preferences then, but perhaps beach-washed birds or fish, or possibly rabbits in the coastal strip was the attraction.

Mr. Wheeler in his Geelong Naturalist article noted that - "During 1960-61, small flocks (of Whistling Kites) were recorded on three occasions on rocky reefs at low tide (on the Bellarine Peninsula)". Then quite suddenly, the birds became scarce - as evidence of this, Mr. T. McKellar wrote in The Bird Observer in August last year - "I have lived for 15-1/2 years on the Barwon River, some three km north of Barwon Heads, and never saw a Whistling Kite until June 16, 1977 (when three were seen)".

In the last decade, perhaps a little longer, the Whistling Kite population seems to have declined, and one can not help but wonder why. Was the Edwards Point bird, found dying, just one of scores which perished due to poisoning, or has the effectiveness of the rabbit destruction campaign so reduced the available food supply as to affect the numbers of kites, or is there some other unknown factor involved? It is interesting to compare the numbers of Whistling Kites with the populations of the Little Eagle, a bird similar in size and habitat preference to the kite. Over the last few years, there have been more sightings of the eagle than in previous times, and one assumes therefore an increase in numbers in the district.

Charles Belcher does not record the Little Eagle in his book, and since he knew his birds well, one must assume that the species was unknown around Geelong prior to 1914.

Wheeler records it as rare on the Bellarine Peninsula in the 1960's, as it has been in most other areas of the district. But, there has been a steady increase in records of the Little Eagle here, and



LITTLE EAGLE

Photo by Trevor Pescott

BIRDS OF PREY IN GEELONG DISTRICT (continued)

the several unconfirmed reports of nests being at the You Yangs in the 1950's have been given some credence by the discovery of an eyrie in an enormous sugar gum there in 1974. On December 1 of that year, a nest was located but the young bird was found dead on the ground below. Appearances suggested some physical deformity in the eaglet, again consistent with chemical poisoning.

The Little Eagle usually has only one egg in a brood, rarely two, although referring again to the West Australian scene in the 1920's, the number of two egg clutches increased rapidly with the eruption of rabbits.

It is difficult to be sure that there is a real increase in the local Little Eagle population, or whether this just appears so now that the kite numbers have fallen. If there is an increase, the question of cause is raised. Perhaps the Little Eagle, as an active hunter, is not so susceptible to poisons since it takes live prey, whereas the kite as a scavenger eats the poisoned rabbits and in time may be affected. The end result is not just the death of the adult bird, but raised infertility, higher nesting mortality and a decreased breeding impulse - that is the complete reverse to the result of a glut of food.

There is some strong similarity in general appearance between the Little Eagle and Whistling Kite, but certain specific differences are noticeable. In flight, the eagle holds its wings level or upraised, while the kite "hangs" the wings; the eagle's tail is shorter and square cut when compared with the long rounded tail of the kite. The eagle has feathered legs, a feature apparent if the bird is perched, but the legs of the kite are longer and unfeathered. This, no doubt, relates to the primary feeding method - the hunting eagle has some protection to its legs since damage could occur when a small mammal is struggling beneath the eagle's talons, but the carrion-feeding kite does not need such protection.

FENNEL, AN AROMATIC ROADSIDE WEED (continued from page 92)

declared noxious weed in Victoria and elsewhere.

Fennel first became a pest in several Melbourne suburbs as early as 1931 when it was proclaimed a noxious weed in the cities of Brighton and Heidelberg. Within 10 years this had extended to nine municipal areas, and by 1950 it had been declared a weed throughout Victoria. Its chief undesirable quality is that it grows into dense thickets up to two metres tall - this causes a reduction of grazing land in agricultural areas since stock will not eat mature plants. In urban areas its nuisance comes from its ability to grow in profusion over unused land, thus creating fire and maintenance problems. Along road verges it causes drainage as well as traffic hazards.

Fennel is spread by seed dispersal, often occurring when water carries them along drains, channels and streams and along road shoulders by machinery doing maintenance works. Flowering occurs in summer, and the seeds germinate in the following months. The plant matures in about 18 to 24 months, with flowers produced after the second summer of the plant's growth.

Fennel dies down in winter, and long, dry stalks remain above the dense crop of new fern-like leaves until there is a renewed growth activity in spring. I have been told these stalks, if burned in a barbecue will give a pleasant, slightly aniseed taste to the cooked meat - but I haven't tried this yet.

It grows profusely in the Geelong area, and in settled areas all over southern Victoria. It is less conspicuous in the Mallee where it is known in the Hattah Lakes National Park as well as at Mildura and Robinvale. Fennel also occurs in the Western District and Gippsland, and in most mainland states, Tasmania and New Zealand.

The word Fennel incidentally, is derived from its Latin name feanum which means "hay" and may refer to its aroma; the specific name vulgare means "common".

JUNIOR PAGES

AN OTWAY "LIVING FOSSIL"

The term "living fossil" is often used to describe animals whose ancestral forebears were identical with the present day forms; one of the animals which lies in this category is the 50 millimetre-long *Peripatus*, a slender multi-legged creature which may best be described as resembling something mid-way between a caterpillar and a centipede, but which is closely allied to neither.

About 75 species of *peripatus* are known to exist in the world, inhabiting the damp, humid forests through the south-temperate regions including Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, central and South America, South Africa and Indonesia.

Australia has only five species in the eastern forests, in Tasmania and in a small sector of south-western Australia, but nowhere are they plentiful and because of their small size, they are rarely seen.

The first species was named *peripatus* from the Greek word meaning "meandering". It was discovered in 1825 in the West Indies, and in the succeeding 150 years the animal has continued to fascinate naturalists.

Although now classified in a phylum of their own - named *onychophora*, a word meaning "claw-bearer", which refers to the tiny claw at the tip of each of its many legs - they were variously included with other groups of animals until their unique character was acknowledged.

Their soft bodies are worm-like, their many legs resemble the centipedes, the claws are a crustacean feature, while their breathing apparatus - external body pores which take air directly in through air-intake tubes - is otherwise confined to insects.

JUNIOR PAGES - AN OTWAY "LIVING FOSSIL" (continued)

Most of the peripatus species throughout the world produce live young which are about five millimetres long at birth. Once fertilised, the eggs are retained by the female in a reproductive duct within her body, where the embryo develops.

Once a certain stage of growth is reached, the young are born as miniatures of the adults - this may take up to 30 weeks, an incredibly long embryonic stage for such a tiny creature.

This is very different from the mammalian reproductive process, and animals which have evolved this method are called viviparous. Many reptiles have developed this same method of embryo development.

Two of the five Australian species are different from the other peripatus species, however, these laying tough-shelled eggs.

The peripatus takes about 18 months to reach maturity, and like many other animals, it regularly moults its skin to allow for the growth in size.

Peripatus is a nocturnal animal, which actively hunts small insects using centipede-like jaws to feed - the one in the photograph was discovered recently in the Otways, as it explored an earthbank on its hunting foray.

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See Coming Events for junior activities.

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A LAST WORD

By Trevor Pescott

With this issue of Geelong Naturalist we close an era - and take a step forward which we hope will provide you with a far superior service. The most obvious effect will be that we are changing our printing method, moving from offset to letter press; since the latter is more economical in space, we will reduce the number of pages, but for the present, we will retain four issues in the year.

Why the drastic change?

Firstly, we have been forced to review our finances, not in a superficial way but in depth; our magazine uses about 50% of our income, perhaps more - and to justify this expenditure we need to provide a service. I believe that we have not done this. Timing has been irregular, quality of printing often poor; the reasons for this are known and must be overcome.

Secondly, we have not been providing an adequate service to members; although we print a monthly Newsletter, few members except those who attend meetings or specifically request that it be mailed to them, see it. Thus members generally know little of the Club's activities, see nothing of the work done by the very active Committee, are unaware of library additions, see few of the excursion and meetings reports..... It is anticipated that we can incorporate quite successfully a precis of these things in Geelong Naturalist.

Thirdly - if we produce a quality journal we will be able to increase distribution, and this reduces the unit cost; there is little difference in cost to print 1000 instead of 600 copies. Therefore if we can sell some of the balance, unit cost falls, more people learn of our existence and activities, and we as a Club will benefit.

Fourth relates directly to finances; this year we are in the "red", and therefore we are obliged to lift our subscription substantially; if we are to justify this increase, we must deliver the "goods". An improved magazine is one factor to consider, and so we have taken this major step.

continued

COMING EVENTS

- February 7 General Meeting. Mr. D. Chaplin, "Baw Baw"
Juniors - Solar System
19 Excursion. Thompson Creek-Breamlea.
Leader - Mr. J. Wheeler
- March 7 General Meeting. Mr. G. Stephens, "Underwater
Photography".
Juniors - Why belong to the G.F.N.C.
11-13 Campout, V.F.N.C.A. To be detailed.
11-13 Campout, G.F.N.C. To be arranged.
19 Excursion. Melba Gully. Leader - Mr. G. Mathison.
- April 4 Annual General Meeting. Members' Night.
Juniors - Observing things around us.
16 Excursion. Edward's Point. Leader - Mr. D. King.
- Juniors meet from 7.30p.m. to 8.15p.m. at McPhillimy Hall.
Details from Mr. I. Woodland or Mr. D. King.

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A LAST WORD (continued)

Now, it is up to you we need the fullest possible support of members through the submission of written material, articles available for reprint from other sources, black-and-white photographs, items of interest, observations on birds, plants, mammals and other animals, newspaper clippings, book reviews, requests for information.

A publishing committee is being formed to better handle sales and distribution, so this should streamline the issue of the journal once it is printed.

TREVOR PEScott, Honorary Editor.

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