

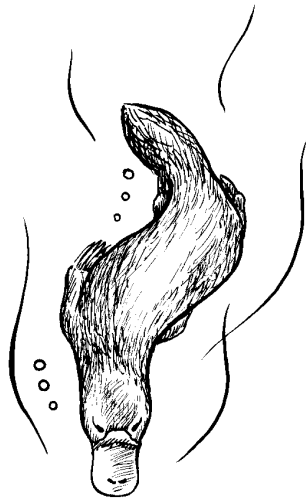
# Bulletin

Quarterly Bulletin No. 384 Month 2021

<https://tasfieldnats.org.au>

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*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we study natural history.*



## Excursion Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Part 1: Pooseum, Richmond

A cool winter's morning greeted 12 of us to an excursion in two parts: first to the Pooseum in Richmond; and then to the nearby Brinktop Reserve. Unlike the weather outside, the Pooseum was warm. We were welcomed by the owner, Karin Koch, who gave us a group discount on the entry fee.

As the name suggests, this place was a scatologist's delight. The displays were new, well presented and explained in clear, simple language. They took in the breadth of the animal kingdom from the microscopic through to blue whales.

Karin took the time to give us an impromptu guided tour, giving us more information than the displays, as well as a few laughs.

Initially she talked about dung beetles. Native Australian dung beetles are not adapted to using cow pats. To reduce the subsequent fly plagues, Dr George Bornemissza worked with the CSIRO on introducing South African species to quickly do away with fresh cow pats. Work continues finding new species suitable for cooler climates like Tasmania.

Sloths are known for being slow and this carries over into their defecation. About once per week, they descend from the trees to ground level and lose a third of their body weight in a single motion. It is also

the time sloths are most prone to predation by jaguars and other carnivores.

There was a particularly interesting computer display showing a three-dimensional view of the digestive and other systems of a variety of animals. It made us aware of how different digestive systems are.

These were just a few examples from the fascinating variety of displays. While Karin talked, heavy rain pounded on the roof, and it was apparent we had made the right decision to come to the Pooseum first.

Complaints about a cartoon figure of a penguin at the front of the museum had been dismissed by the council only a week before the visit. Karin showed some videos, and it soon became apparent why she had chosen the penguin for her logo! Apparently, kids love it and want to see it time and time again.



Field Nats at Pooseum  
Photo: Eddie Gall

The time flew with the displays and Karin's talk. It was a great place and interests young and old alike. We stayed longer than intended and had to hurriedly grab a coffee on the short drive to Brinktop Reserve.

**Eddie Gall**

## Part 2: 'Brinktop Bushland Reserve', Richmond.

Following an excellent and most informative visit to the Richmond 'Poosum', where we got to see and learn much about 'poo!' (If you haven't already been to see it, next time you are in Richmond we would recommend it for both adults and children). 15 members then met up at the 'Brinktop Bushland Reserve' car park, 2k east of Richmond.



Field Nats at Brinktop.  
Photograph: Geoff Carle

This bushland reserve developed in 2017 is best described as '*Eucalyptus globulus* dry grassy woodland' and it provides a remnant vegetation corridor along the ridge line of the Pontos Hills on the eastern side of the Coal River valley.

The path through the reserve was easy, affording views over farmland in the Coal River Valley towards Richmond. Information signs placed beside the track marked trees, plants and grasses. A large sign noted the lifestyle of First Nations Moomairremener people in this area, vegetation of the Coal River Valley and Habitat and vegetation of the reserve.

The reserve is quite small and easily accessible. Our walk took only about half an hour. It provides a valuable habitat for birds, smaller mammals and invertebrates, but in late winter few were seen! The first bird on the scene was a 'dumped' rooster hoping for a feed! A grey fantail came to check us out and later a yellow wattle bird was seen. There was evidence of

brush-tail possum (*Trichosurus vulpeca*) browsing on eucalyptus leaves and droppings on the ground below confirmed its species. Mature trees of *Eucalyptus globulus* and *E. ovata* provide potential foraging habitat for the Swift Parrot. Few plants were in flower, but we saw last season's inflorescences of the native Kangaroo Grass, *Themeda triandra* and plants of the endangered *Vittadinia muelleri* (New Holland Daisy) with some new seasons regrowth just beginning. In addition, rosettes of the spoon-shaped leaves of Tasmania's only representative of the *Ptilotus* genus *Ptilotus spathulatus* (Pussy Tails) were photographed.

**Robyn Gates and Annabel Carle**



*Ptilotus spathulatus*  
Photograph: Geoff Carle

## Excursion to Chesterman's Sugarloaf and Pony Bottom Creek

5<sup>th</sup> September 2021

I will begin at the end, because it was such an unexpected experience shared by so many. As we were about to pile in our cars to go home, in the centre of the heavily metaled and compacted gravel road, someone spotted the opened lid of a trapdoor spider's lair and, catching the afternoon sun on its palps and head, its occupant. Everyone crowded around to behold and, in turn, to apply macro settings on phone or camera, to reveal the spider's details.

We had entered Wielangta via the recently upgraded gravel forestry road from Copping, and parked where Pony Bottom Creek passes under the road to join the Sandspit River. Our maps label this area 'Rheban', but the residents of Rheban live several kilometres further east.



Field Nats at Chestermans  
Photograph: Annabel Carle

Our hosts, Mark Agnew and partner Sally Meredith, purchased the block encompassing most of Chesterman's and Cotton's Sugarloafs a few years ago to protect it. It has experienced successions of selective logging since European settlement, and once had a significant sawmill supplying the construction of London's wharves and the Sorell causeways. They have named the block 'Publadina' for its many Wombats.

The sugarloaves are eroded dolerite intrusions sitting on sedimentary layers evident at their bases.

We first followed a very old and overgrown snigging track at the base of Cotton's Sugarloaf, then crossed the wide valley floor that is bisected by Pony Bottom Creek – a small stream on Sunday morning, despite having been a raging torrent after heavy rain on Friday – to follow another vehicle track at the base of Chesterman's Sugarloaf to return to Wielangta Road. At this point the presence of Northern Hemisphere Ericas, likely introduced by road maintenance machinery, concerned us. Mark undertook to exterminate these before they could set their abundant fine seed.

We then drove along a quarry access road to reach the gravel road which we ascended on foot to a shelf about 250m from the top of Chesterman's Sugarloaf. Here we enjoyed our lunch while billies boiled on a wood fire in a former washing machine bowl.

The weather was kind to us, with plenty of sunshine and little mud. This enabled plenty of observations, whether underfoot or overhead. Most of us reached the top of Chesterman's Sugarloaf to enjoy the

expansive views and orient ourselves. On our return to the cars, we diverted along a very overgrown track to see a water-filled 'swale' populated with frogs.

Mark was a font of information about fire, use and general histories. We thank him for his hospitality and engagement. Perhaps we might return in a different season to see what else we discover!

**Peter Blackwell**



Tea break on Chesterman's Sugarloaf  
Photograph: Annabel Carle

## Excursion Crescent Bay and Mount Brown

9<sup>th</sup> October 2021

The excursion to Mt Brown and Crescent Bay began in an unusual way with an early morning knot of Naturalists clustering around the Cube coffee van, overlooking Pirates Bay, anxious to start their day with a good dose of caffeine!



Field Nats about to start off for Crescent Bay  
Photo: Amanda Thomson

The 19 Nats then reformed at the beginning of the newly formed track for the obligatory expedition photo. It was suggested that everyone walk directly to

Crescent Bay for lunch before starting to explore the area. Perhaps these words were carried away on the breeze, as by the time that the advance party had arrived at the beach, the knot had well and truly unravelled! Members were strung way back out along the path in true Field Nats style with even a few rogue outliers already toiling up the steep scree slope to Mt Brown.

Eventually some sort of order was restored and after a welcome lunch those following the original orders headed up to the peak to enjoy the extensive views towards Tasman Island and Cape Raoul. Rather disappointingly we didn't spot any whales, which had been seen in the area very recently. At this point the weather drew in for an extended shower and we retreated down the path, glad to have brought our wet weather gear. But the weather was as confused as the party had been, and we finished in spring sunshine having had a lovely day.



*Caledonia echidnachila*  
Photo: Amanda Thomson

Here are a few of the observations made on the walk. Simon Grove found a stiletto fly on the beach, the tunnelling larvae of which he had mentioned at the prior meeting. The coastal heath was bright with the lemon and purple powder puff blossoms of *Acacia verticillate* and *Melaleuca squamea*. And a delicate fawn spider orchid (*Caledonia echidnachila*) was discovered by the track, whilst a flame robin posed showily for photographs.

All these and further observations made on the outing can be seen on the iNaturalist site (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/tas-field-nats-2021-oct-crescent-bay-and-mt-brown> )



Flame robin (*Petroica phoenicea*)  
Photo: Amanda Thomson

**Jane Catchpole**

## New home for the Field Guide to the Insects of Tasmania.



After smugly building the large Insects of Tasmania Google site thinking that an internet Goliath would never leave people in the lurch, Google did exactly that! It did kindly foreshadow warnings that it was going to close the platform unless we upgraded to the new Google sites but when we made attempts it didn't work for a photo heavy website. After major procrastination, side "upsizing" projects, agonising and general lack of action from the original team of two, Yoav Bar-Ness, editor of *Tasmanian Geographic* offered to combine forces and use his computing skills to save the day. He slurped the contents of the old Insects of Tasmania to a new and "future proof" interface.

A lot of tidying up later, we are very excited to have a new and functional site:

<https://tasmanianinsectfieldguide.com/>

IOT contains 3500 totally revised and searchable pages of insects and pseudo-insects found in Tasmania. The new site offers a fresher look with lightbox photo-viewing. The taxonomy is also more extensive and there is much more space for new additions. Some of the favourite features of the old site, such as "Moths by Colour" have temporarily disappeared, but will be rebuilt as time becomes available. We have always felt motivated and supported by the Tasmanian Field

Naturalists Club and hope that the resource is of interest to the creepy-crawly enthusiasts.

**Kristi Ellingsen and Tony Daley.**

**Sad news. Chris Spencer (30 March 1957 – 20 August 2021)**



In this year's 'The Tasmanian Naturalist' there will be a moving obituary written by Karen Richards for her partner Chris Spencer who was a valued member of this club. Chris died of an aggressive cancer just two months from his first diagnosis. Chris was a passionate life-long naturalist, concentrating on Tasmanian avifauna, vertebrates and invertebrates. Together Chris and Karen have published over 30 papers. Many of these publications can be found in past editions of 'The Tasmanian Naturalist.' However, Karen assures us this is not the end and there will be more 'Spencer and Richards' publications as she completes research they already have in draft.

In November, for those interested, Karen is planning a celebration for Chris, perhaps to be held in a park, and it will be time to share some food and fond memories 'of her little man.' Please email Karen on [spenric@gmail.com](mailto:spenric@gmail.com) to let her know if you would like to be there.

## News from the TFNC Committee October 2021

The committee has agreed that we will adopt the following sentence which will be included in future in all our publications, website and on the front slide of our General meetings:

*"We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we study natural history"*

### Our new Bulletin Editor

Kristin Groom is our new Bulletin Editor, and this is her first edition. We welcome her to the position and thank her very much for volunteering to take over this role from Deirdre Brown. At TFNCs September committee meeting, as allowed by our Club Rules, Deirdre resigned, and Kristin was elected as Bulletin Editor in her place. Deirdre is continuing her role as our Website Editor will stay on the committee as an observer at this stage, until our next AGM in March.

Deirdre was first elected as our Bulletin Editor 2014 and in that time has produced over 30 editions of the Bulletin, whilst also ably assisting Mick Brown in his role as Editor of 'The Tasmanian Naturalist' AND she is also our Website editor. We have so much to thank her for!

### The Tasmanian Naturalist

The 2021 Edition of 'The Tasmanian Naturalist' is currently being edited and compiled and we anticipate that it will get to the printers in the next month or so and we hope it will be available by the end of this year. We thank all those who have submitted articles.

### iNaturalist and TFNC

The use of iNaturalist is becoming more familiar to us all and the committee decided that we will continue to submit our observations into iNaturalist. The Bulletin will still publish an article about the excursion but instead of long species lists, we will just refer to some of the most interesting things seen with maybe with a photo or two.

Our easy to-follow iNaturalist instructions including use of /access to TFNCs iNat Projects can be found on our website at: <https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/citizen-science/>

### General Meeting Venue

Our monthly General Meeting venue has at least returned to UTAS. The Law Seminar Room, our venue for the last two meetings, has great AV facilities, but some members have reported that it felt a bit crowded. We hope that by opening the big doors and keeping the meetings as short as possible we can help with that problem. Directions to the Law Seminar room are available on our website.

We had hoped to get back into Life Sciences Lecture Theatre 1 with access to our Library, but at this stage

the COVID requirements for after-hours access to that building are proving too difficult.

### **Easter camp at Tullah, West Coast, Tasmania Friday 15 April to Sunday 17 April**

If you are interested in attending the Easter camp, please check our website for details how to make a preliminary booking: <https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>.

This is of course all dependent on the COVID situation in Tasmania by Easter.

### **2021 Australian Natural History (ANH) Medallion Nomination**

We were advised in September that our joint nomination of Genevieve Gates and David Ratkowsky for this Medallion was unsuccessful. This was not unexpected because the COVID lockdowns in Melbourne had delayed the ANH Medallion rules review that had been expected. These rules clearly state the medallion is to be awarded to a single living person. We will look at this again in the New Year and see if the rules have changed or not for the 2022 Medallion and decide then whether to submit a single or joint nomination.

### **Donations**

The committee agreed that \$250 donations should be made this year to each to the following organisations. Derwent Estuary Program; Tasmanian Land Conservancy; Threatened Plants Tasmania and the Australian Natural History Medallion fund.

### **Welcome to all New Members!**

We always welcome new members and returning members at our meetings, but they are not always there to hear it! Please check out our website and contact any of the committee members with any queries or suggestions.

Our committee and contact details can be found at <https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/membership/>

### **TFNC Books for Sale**

Please don't forget that we sell the books that we have published, and these are listed in our Bookshop on our website: <https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/bookshop/>

Any new members who have yet to receive their free copy of our history book 'A Century Afield 1904-2004'

by Janet Fenton, please ask for one at a General meeting.

### **The Clubs Observation Books and Observations extracted from the Bulletins.**

Over the past five years, these observations have been extracted from the above two sources and the digitisation is at last complete and can be found on our website at 'About us':

<https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/about-us/>

Scroll down to the bottom of the page to find searchable pdf documents:

- TFNC Conservation Matters, Fauna and Flora Observations 1937-1999 inc.
- TFNC Conservation Matters, Fauna and Flora Observations 2000 onwards.

### *Why have we done this?*

Our Bulletins contain many interesting articles, and the pdfs provide a quick searchable reference for these topics, enabling members to know exactly which Bulletin to open to see the full article.

Why have an observation book if no one has access to it? Over the years there are sightings which record the dates of early arrivals of feral/introduced species into Tasmania as well as sightings, locations and behaviours of our endemic flora and fauna. The pdfs record the exact entries complete with, in later years, some photographs.

### **Dragonfly and Damselfly photos.**

Dr Michael Driessen (previous TFNC President and Senior Zoologist at DPIPWE) is working on a new field guide of Tasmanian Dragonflies and Damselflies, and he is asking for any photographs of adults, larvae, metamorphosis or behaviours that he could use. He may be contacted at:

[michael.driessen@dPIPWE.tas.gov.au](mailto:michael.driessen@dPIPWE.tas.gov.au)

### **Finally....**

Our website always has the latest/up to date information for our upcoming speakers and excursions. See: <https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/> Please let Eddie Gall our President know if you would like to give a 5-10mins talk at 'Members night' at our December meeting.

If you have any other comments or suggestions for speakers and excursions or any other suggestions - Please contact us by emailing our secretary Lynne Maher [secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au](mailto:secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au)