

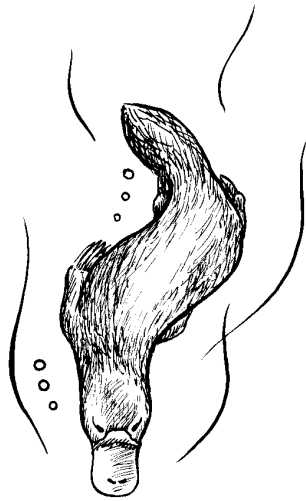
# Bulletin

Quarterly Bulletin No. 385 January 2022

<https://tasfieldnats.org.au>

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



## Return to Coal River Tier

October 30<sup>th</sup> 2021

Following the successful excursion in July, members Donna Cutriss and Steve Hamilton from Zoodoo invited TFNC back for a return excursion in late October.

Even though it was October, the day before had the year's heaviest downpour and equal coldest maximum temperature. As expected following such weather, the turnout was low with 11 members being greeted by a pleasant, cool, sunny day.

After coffees at Zoodoo, the first 100 metres still had some mud from the earlier rain, but the moisture brought out a chorus of three different frog species. Once into the fields, the breeze had dried the grasses, so the rest of the excursion was dry.



Field Nats at Cola River Valley  
Photo: Eddie Gall

The Coal River Tier is covered by an open forest of black peppermints, blue gums and white gums and skirted in the valley by grassland which combines poa grasses with weeds left over from previous farming practices.



Early Nancy - *Wurmbea dioica*  
Photo: Eddie Gall

On the previous excursion, Kevin Bonham had found a new species of snail and headed off to search for it in new locations. His search was successful and showed that its distribution is not confined to a single, small location. His article on this new snail can be found in the October edition of the Quarterly Bulletin.

The rest of us searched the slopes to see what we could find. Most of the findings were recorded in iNaturalist. At the time of writing, 127 separate species had been

up-loaded, from Zoodoo's first velvet worm to insects, spiders, birds, ferns, and flowers.



*Chlenias zonaea*  
Photo: Eddie Gall

At the end of the excursion, Donna made Zoodoo available to participants so there was the obligatory viewing of the Tasmanian devils and quolls. A new addition was the flock of young swift parrots (*Lathamus discolor*). They are a reserve population and are being bred for release back into the wild.

**Eddie Gall**

## Excursion to Tooms Lake

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Fifteen Field Nats attended the November outing to Tooms Lake, the site of several outings in the club's distant past. On our most recent trip in March 2018, we followed the northern shore of the lake. For this trip, the Tooms River was flowing too strongly to cross without getting wet, so we followed a 4WD track behind the shacks south of the car park and headed south along the shore at Halls Bay.



Field Nats at Tooms Lake  
Photograph: Amanda Thomson

This was very much a "Field Nats pace" outing and in all we ventured just over a kilometre from our starting

point observing insects, other invertebrates, birds and plants. Observations (many posted on iNaturalist as usual) included two species of jewel beetle, pseudoscorpions, at least one feather-legged assassin bug and various jumping spiders. We also saw insect life in the small piles of sticks and leaves washed up at the edge of the lake. Everywhere I went on this outing I noticed two constant presences - the sight of Hobart Brown butterflies (*Argynnis hobartia*) and the sound of striated pardalotes. Plants seen were probably less interesting than the 2018 outing when we looked along the lake shore, but it was surprising to see two spider orchids in bud at the start of the walk - assumed to be *Caladenia dilatata* based on past records from the area.



*Pardalotus striatus*  
Photograph: Els Wakefield

On return to the car park area, we found a grand old eucalypt riddled with hollows of various sizes which was something of a striated pardalote hotel. Perhaps as many as twenty pardalotes could be seen going in and out of holes, flying around nearby treetops or perching on the tree trunk. We watched these for quite a while. In the time I was watching I did not notice any sign of conflict between different pardalotes - one might occupy a particular place, but it would soon move on to another part of the tree and be replaced by another, and so on.

**Kevin Bonham**



*Lepispilus sulcicollis* at Tooms Lake  
Photograph: Amanda Thomson

## Excursion to Inala

29<sup>th</sup> November 2021

We were lucky enough to be invited back to Inala on Bruny Island at the end of November for a spring survey to complement the surveys we had done in March. For those who haven't been to Inala, it is a 600ha property near Lunawanna on south Bruny which has been established a private nature reserve ([www.inalanaturetours.com.au](http://www.inalanaturetours.com.au)).

As is traditional, the majority of the group had left early enough to fit in a stimulating cup of coffee before the 'rigours' of the day – in this case at the lovely Rye's Up café.

The weather was stunning, sunny and warm with very little wind. We assembled for our group photo and then headed off into the forest, around the various ponds and dams or up to the moorland area, depending on inclination and taxonomic group of interest.



Field Nats at INALA  
Photo: Eddie Gall

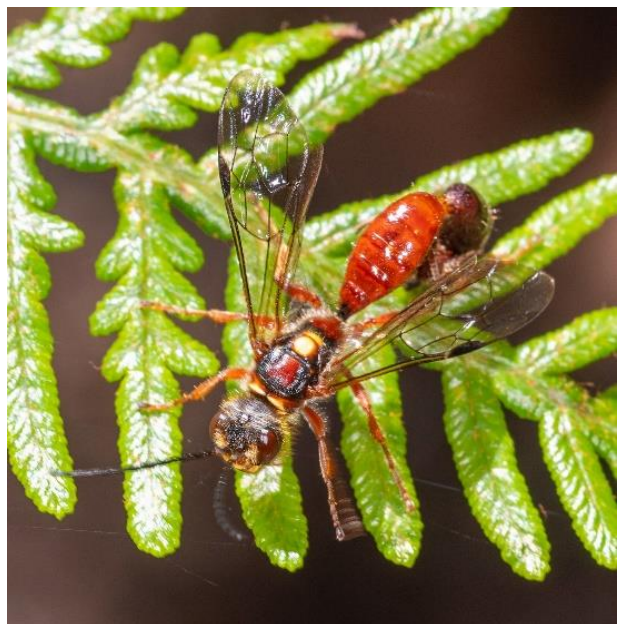
In total, 300 observations representing at least 161 species have been uploaded to iNaturalist, considerably

more than the 217 observations from the March trip. Lots of orchids (at least 10 species) were in flower, the highlight for many people being the leafless greenhood (*Pterostylis aphylla*) found up in the moorland area. Other exciting observations include the dusky antechinus seen by Peter Crofts and water bugs and beetles fished out by Kristi Ellingsen.



Tasmanian dusky antechinus (*Antechinus swainsonii*).  
Photo: Peter Crofts

Despite the warm weather, there didn't seem to be as many insects flying around as might be expected, perhaps a legacy of the cool and damp weather in early spring. Nevertheless, there were a number of bees and wasps, including mating pairs of flower wasps with the female being carried, somewhat ignominiously, along by the male.



Mating pair of flower wasps *Tachynomyia abdominalis* (Thynnidae). Photo: Keith Martin-Smith

All-in-all, a great day, adding valuable data to the species lists documenting the biodiversity of the Inala reserve.

**Keith Martin-Smith**

## What animal made this nest?



Who's nest?  
Photo: Annabel Carle

This was a question that our member Tonia Cochran (of Inala) asked TFNC members when we were at Inala in November.

The nest was found in one of her hanging baskets inside the 'shed/tea room.' It was c. 20-25cm dia. and the entrance hole c. 5-6cm wide and made primarily from the fronds of the fern growing in the hanging basket. At the time pygmy possum was suggested. Tonia was quite sure it was not made by a bird as they would have noticed a bird flying in/out of the shed. Since then, Facebook members of the Field Naturalists of Tasmania site were asked but did not come up with any other suggestions apart from Sugar Gliders (hope not!) and Ring-tailed possum (nest too small.)

In the end we think Tonia has solved it herself. "It's just occurred to me that the nest may have been made by an Antechinus. We have both Swamp and Dusky here and I see them trundling around the shed .. I'd like to think it was the female Swamp Antechinus I hand-reared 2-3 years ago. But she would be a grand old lady now, so more probably it is one of her descendants! There are Antechinus everywhere here at the moment, it must be breeding season. I suppose I will find dead males everywhere soon!"

## "Antechinus a good problem to have!"

Antechinus are known to make spherical nests in hollow logs and crevices but can sometime be found nesting in furniture in bush areas and farms.

**Annabel Carle**

## Bryophytes at Inala

When TFNC was asked to revisit Inala in November, Tonia Cochran asked if we could ask Dr Perpetua (Pep) Turner come down to help identify their bryophytes. Pep was unavailable, but she kindly offered to do some identifications if we collected specimens and offered to run an identification workshop for us at a mutually agreed time.

Pep has since kindly identified from photographs, six of the seven bryophyte specimens collected at least to genus level. These IDs have been entered into iNaturalist as part of the TFNC Inala November project.



Moss - *Thuidopsis furfurosa* or *sparsa*  
Photo: Annabel Carle

After the end of January, Pep intends to examine the actual specimens microscopically, when it is hoped she may be able to refine the identifications to species level.

At a better time of year for both Bryophytes and Fungi, it is hoped some of us may be able to return to Inala, probably on an unofficial excursion, to have another, better look for both these groups.



*Spagnum australe* or *cristatum*  
Photo: Annabel Carle

Annabel Carle

## Miena Jewel Beetle unofficial outing

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2022

Because of a warm weather forecast, this year's unofficial Miena Jewel Beetle (*Castiarina insculpta*) hunt took place on Saturday 22 January. For whatever reasons (some COVID-related, most apparently not) several members who were considering coming couldn't make it on the day and as a result only four of us ended up going for what became a mixed MJB/orchid trip.



Mena Jewel Beetle (*Castiarina insculpta*) – deceased  
Photo: Kevin Bonham

The beetle tends to have a two-year cycle of "on" years when it is numerous and "off" years when it is scarce. 2022 was scheduled to be an off year, but prior reports from Karen Richards and Bruno Bell had suggested it was commoner than normal for an off year this year. Our first stop at Liawenee confirmed this to a degree - while the species wasn't near "on year" levels, eight jewel beetles were seen flying in an hour or so, probably mostly or all MJBs. However, the beetles were so warmed up and active that those we saw were

resting only very briefly. None could be caught and only one was seen clearly enough to be certain it was *C. insculpta*. It seems there is such a thing as a day being too warm for observing this species!

On an orchid search along Rainbow Point Road, we came across a very dead *C. insculpta*, which brought back memories of James Wood's find in 2008 which kickstarted our interest in this species. We also spent about 40 minutes at Lake Ada in search for the larger *C. rudis* but there were no definite sightings.

Kevin Bonham

## Le Souëf Memorial Award

**Congratulations to TFNC members Kristi Ellingsen and Tony Daley who have won the Entomological Society of Victoria's Le Souëf Memorial Award.**

The Entomological Society of Victoria's Le Souëf Memorial Award was instituted in memory of John Cecil Le Souëf (nick-named 'Zoo'). One of his achievements was to re-establish the Entomological Society of Victoria in 1961 after a lapse of 20 years. Details of J.C. Le Souëf's entomological work can be found in archives at <https://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/guides/leso/06.htm>. A synopsis of his life, as well as a history of the Award can be found in an article by Ian Endersby on p.22 *Victorian Entomologist* Vol. 41 No.1 February 2011.

The Le Souëf Memorial Award was established to offer encouragement to an amateur entomologist and has only been awarded 17 times in 31 years, most recently to Peter Marriott in 2013, Ken Harris in 2019, and Paul Hutchinson, in 2020.

We are pleased to announce that the recipients for 2021 are TFNC members Kristi Ellingsen and Tony Daley, in recognition of their tireless work to set up and administer the *Insects of Tasmania* website - 3500 totally revised and searchable pages of insects and pseudo-insects found in Tasmania - providing a free resource to anyone who has an interest in the fascinating world of insects. They are also actively sharing their extensive knowledge through participation in citizen science projects and forums. You can find out more about Kristi and Tony and see some of their excellent work on their website <https://tasmanianinsectfieldguide.com/welcome/about-us/>.

## iNaturalist in 2021

2021 saw TFNC start to use iNaturalist for recording excursion observations.

iNaturalist is a world-wide electronic social network of naturalists, citizen scientists and biologists using mobile applications on its website. It is a joint initiative of the Californian Academy of Scientists and the National Geographic Society set up to share recordings of observations of biodiversity across the world. By February 2021 it had already recorded over 66 million observations.

Clare Hawkins gave the TFNC an introductory presentation on Zoom in 2020 and in May 2021 wrote some very useful instructions on how to use iNaturalist. These instructions and links to our iNaturalist projects are available from our website through a link on the left-hand side of our home page. As new users have found, once you have used iNaturalist a couple of times, it becomes very easy.

TFNC use of iNaturalist began with an excursion in March 2021 to Inala on Bruny Island. TFNC member Tonia Cochrane, the managing director of Inala, was interested in documenting more of the variety of animals and plants on her property. TFNC gladly accepted her invitation and in the trial of iNaturalist, eight of us recorded 217 observations of 127 species.

Since June 2021, iNaturalist became our regular way of recording and viewing observations, replacing species lists in this quarterly newsletter – with the advantage that observations are now much more easily available to other citizen scientists and researchers. Peter Crofts has undertaken the role of setting up TFNC projects in iNaturalist to bring everyone's excursion observations together in one easily accessible form.

The number of species recorded in each location should not be taken as an indication of the biodiversity of an area – as record numbers depend much more on the number of observers and the weather on the day!

In July, members Donna Cutriss and Steven Hamilton invited TFNC to survey Coal River Tier, part of the Zoodoo property. This resulted in 431 observations of 219 species by 13 observers. The success in recording much of the diversity in Inala and Zoodoo resulted in us

being invited back to record spring-time species in October for Zoodoo and November for Inala.

Our year's excursion findings on iNaturalist are summarised in the table - 24 observers have made 1,983 observations of 701 separate species. It has been noted that some observation identifications have been confirmed by both locals and non-Tasmanians, showing interest by specialists from elsewhere.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to recording on iNaturalist. It can sometimes take a while to identify down to the species level. Also, thanks to everyone else who comes along on the excursions – some members, who don't use iNaturalist, find and point out interesting things for us to record that otherwise we would have missed!

### TFN iNaturalist observations to date:

Excursion	Number of Observations	Species Count
Inala (March)	217	127
Cape Deslacs (June)	72	55
Coal River Tier (July)	431	219
Brinktop Bushland Reserve (August)	38	36
Ponybottom Creek & Chestermans Sugarloaf (September)	333	184
Crescent Bay & Mt Brown (October)	192	110
Coal River Tier (October)	221	133
Tooms Lake (November)	167	101
Inala (November)	300	161
<b>Tas Field Naturalists 2021</b>	<b>1,989</b>	<b>704*</b>

\* In the total, each species identified is only counted once regardless of the number of excursions it was found on.

**Eddie Gall**

## Evolutionary ecology of black rats in Tasmania

One of our members, Kawinwit Kittipalawattanol, is undertaking PhD research on the impact of the introduction of black rats into Tasmania titled "*Evolutionary ecology of black rats, a super-invasive species*". The researcher will trap small mammals, particularly black rats, to collect genetic samples, and is

requesting additional samples from the public to increase the sample size.

The black rat is one of the world's most destructive alien invasive species and is known to displace native small mammals in Tasmania. From camera images, 90% of all small mammal records are now comprised of black rats. There are knowledge gaps in how the decline of the native apex predator, the Tasmanian devil, and the subsequent increase of feral cats, affects populations of black rats, and the impact that black rats have on native small mammals.

The project will attempt to close these gaps by addressing the following questions:

- How does devil decline influence the ecological interactions amongst devils, feral cats, quolls, and black and native swamp rats? and
- What are the effects of environment and devil decline on gene flow in black rats?

If you are culling black rats in bushland habitats you are invited to save specimens for collection by Kawinwit (Ink) Kittipalawattanapol ([kawinwit.kittipalawattanapol@utas.edu.au](mailto:kawinwit.kittipalawattanapol@utas.edu.au)). If you can help, your specimens will greatly contribute to the conservation of native small mammals in Tasmania.

More information is available from the Citizen Science page of the TFNC website.

**Eddie Gall**

## News from the Committee January 2022

### COVID 2022 and Omicron

It's nearly two years since Covid changed how we have been able to operate our club. If previous pandemics are anything to go by, we still have another 1-2 years to go. Let's hope the Omicron variant is the beginning of the end.

2022 is bringing us yet more changes. As TFNC is required to follow Government guidelines, at the 27<sup>th</sup> January TFNC Committee meeting it was agreed that Members:

- must wear a face mask to all indoor meetings (speakers excepted).

- Must have up-to-date vaccinations in order to attend **both general meetings and excursions**.
- be able to show 'a green tick' on their smart phone or bring an up-to-date vaccination certificate with them.
- complete the 'Tas check-in' at both general meetings and excursions as required by Government guidelines.

For TFNCs own insurance purposes, please **also** sign in on the TFNCs attendance list to record your name and phone number.

In addition, members are still required to follow the COVID safety rules we have had in place since the pandemic began. These are:

- only TFNC members can attend meetings and excursions.
- it is each member's responsibility not to put others at risk, so if you are unwell or have "flu-like symptoms", make sure you stay at home, and please get tested.
- use the hand sanitiser provided.
- please socially distance at the required spacing.
- at the end of meetings, please use provided sanitising wipes to clean chairs and other surfaces that have been touched.

The latest version on TFNC's 'COVID safety' rules may be found on our website at <https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>

### Thursday 3 February 2022 General Meeting is cancelled

At the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 Committee meeting it was decided that we will **not** hold a General Meeting in February 2022, whilst we see how then Omicron variant progresses in Tasmania. Many of our members are in the vulnerable category and we do not want to risk spreading the virus to them.

### Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2022 Excursion. Meet at 10am at the Old Convict Road, Orford

Full details may be found on our website <https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>

## 2022 General Meeting Venue

We expect to continue to hold our General Meetings at the UTAS Law Seminar room, for the foreseeable future. For details see:

<https://tasfieldnats.org.au/data/documents/Field-Nats-venueDec2021.pdf>

We continue to try to organise access to the Life Sciences Building and our stranded Library and Archive cupboard, but UTAS' after hours COVID requirements are still proving too difficult.

## 2022 Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 3 March 2022.

As required by our Club Rules, we provide notice of this meeting with this Bulletin and a nomination form for the 2022 committee. The completed nomination forms must be received by the **TFNC Secretary by Monday 21 February 2022** ([secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au](mailto:secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au)).

Please consider contributing to the club by standing for our committee. It can be very rewarding and great friendships are made! Nominations may be received for all positions whether they are currently occupied or not. There are six committee meetings held each year, currently held by Zoom in the evening of the last Thursday of January, March, May, July, September and November. Committee members are expected to attend most, if not all these meetings.

### Committee vacancies; -

- Vice President: works closely with the President and committee as required and deputises for the President in their absence.
  - Anna McEldowney is stepping down from this role which she has held for the last two years (thank you Anna, you have made an enormous contribution to the club in these two COVID years) but it is anticipated that she will remain on the committee to continue in her Book Sales role.
- One General Member to assist in any way required in the running of the Club.
  - As expected, we said goodbye to Jenny Schorta at the end of 2021 as she headed for two years on the mainland. Jenny was on our committee in 2021 and we thank her very much for her contribution. We look forward to welcoming her back to the Club in 2024!

## Annual Subs are now due

Please note, to stand for the committee and to vote at the AGM - subs must be paid please by 3 March 2022.

The subs are easy to pay. There are a number of ways to do this (PayPal, direct deposit, cheque or at a regular TFNC meeting). For details see our membership website page.

<https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/membership/>

## Have your contact details changed?

- Have we got all the names of your family members? If payment is made by PayPal this information is often missing
- Have we got your mobile number?

Please email changes to our Treasurer Jane at [treasurer@tasfield.nats.org.au](mailto:treasurer@tasfield.nats.org.au)

## Easter camp at Tullah Friday 15 April to Sunday 17 April.

At this stage we are still planning our Easter Camp at Tullah. We are hoping that Keith and Sib Corbett will be able to join us to share their wealth of knowledge on the geology and natural history of the west coast.

If you have already booked, it will be up to you to make payment directly with the Lakeside Lodge at least 48 hours before arrival.

It's not too late to book, but you must make your own booking directly with the Lakeside Lodge at Tullah.

**Further details are on our website at:**

<https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/news/>

## Betsey Island Trip

It is intended that we will have another attempt at the excursion to Betsey Island in May 2022. Let's hope for better weather this year.

**As usual our latest information can be found on our website:**

<https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>