TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB INC.

established 1904.

BULLETIN

http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/tasfield/

Editor: Don Hird.

Bulletin No. 298 (quarterly) **April 2000**

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal The Tasmanian Naturalist annually in October. People with a range of ages, background and knowledge are welcome as members.
Contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) for further information or write to GPO Box 68, Hobart, 7001.

General Meetings start at 7.45 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting outside the to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance in Macquarie Street. Bring lunch and all-weather outdoor gear.
If you are planning to attend an outing but have not been to the prior meeting, phone to check as to the timing of the excursion (with Genevieve Gates; 62 278 638 or Don Hird; 62 344 293). Unforeseen changes sometimes occur.

Program

Thurs. 4 May. 7.45p.m.: Dr Caleb Gardner, who has undertaken extensive studies on the Tasmanian Giant Crab, will speak on that beast and related aspects of crustacean biology. Caleb currently is undertaking further research at the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute (TAFI).

Sat 6 May Excurs. Meet at TAFI at Crayfish Point, Taroona at 10.00 a.m. Any Museum departure will be by arrangement, leaving at 0945 a.m. TAFI staff conduct research into several native species of current or potential economic importance. The excursion should take around two hours.

Thurs. 1 June Michael Garrett, a Tasmanian author and expert on Ferns, will speak on this ancient but successful group of plants, and his book on the subject.

Sat 3 June Excurs. 9.00 a.m.: We will visit Snug Falls, a fine venue for ferns, snails, fungi and field nats. Relatively easy walking is involved.

Thurs. 6 July 7.45p.m.: Gintaras Kantvilas from the Tasmanian Herbarium will speak on his recently released book on Rainforest Lichens of Tasmania (see New Books in the Library in this bulletin).

Sat. 8 July Excurs. 9.00 a.m.: Saturday or Sunday TBA. Mt Field is a venue where at altitude the tree-dwelling lichens grow at lower heights. We will do the Lake Dobson circuit

with this in mind, with the possibility of other walks depending on the weather and excursioners.

Tasmanian Jewel Beetles is the next Field Guide to be published by the Club. An illustrated account of each of the 50 or so recorded species will be provided. The author is David Cowie, a retired teacher who has had a long interest in jewel beetles. Details to follow. We are planning to print only a small initial run of this book as we still have many copies of Butterflies of Tasmania several years after it was released.

New Annual Subscriptions for year 2000 onwards
Family $30 Individual Adult $25 Junior / Concession $20

Year 2000 Committee

President	Genevieve Gates
Vice President	Andrew Walsh
Treasurer	John Reid
Secretary	Julia Scott
***Bulletin* Editor**	Don Hird
Walks & Talks	Amanda Thomson
Naturalist Editor	Rob Taylor
Librarian	Janet Fenton
General Cttee	Tom Terry
General Cttee	Kevin Bonham

Federation Report
The most recent "weekend" of the Federation of Field Naturalist Clubs of Tasmania was hosted by the north-east field naturalists and centered at St. Helens, during 1-2 April 2000. Our Club contingent consisted of Kevin Bonham (delegate), David Ratkowsky, Genevieve Gates and her son Marc, soon-to-be eight years old. The long trip to St. Helens on the Friday evening featured carsickness, heavy rain (especially between Fingal and St. Marys Pass) and the hitting of a wallaby that unexpectedly bolted in front of the car.

The main venue for excursions was the Blue Tier near Poimena, about three-quarters of an hour drive from St. Helens. One of these was an invertebrate walk jointly led by Bob Mesibov and Kevin Bonham along the short but interesting Goblin Forest Walk, followed by a longer walk along the Three Notch Track, the latter noted for its extensive patches of remnant rainforest which survived the earlier mining and forestry activities in the Blue Tier. The weather was fine but chilly there, at an elevation of about 700m. Genevieve and David jointly led a fungi-search walk along the same tracks. Because the northeast had had rain throughout most of the summer, in contrast to the drought conditions over most of the rest of Tasmania, participants found themselves in a paradise of fungi. A long list of 80 species was obtained, including a half dozen target species in the Fungimap Project.

Although the conditions should have been propitious for the appearance of snails, Kevin's list of snail species was shorter than what he obtained during previous visits to the Blue Tier. In addition to the invertebrates and fungi walks at the Blue Tier, there was also a coastal walk in the Binalong Bay and Moulting Bay areas. Those coastal walkers experienced more mild conditions than those at the Blue Tier.

Saturday evening was the Federation get-together dinner, provided by the ladies of the St. Helens Uniting Church. This was followed by an interesting talk by retired D.P.I. veterinarian Dr. Tim McManus on his unusual English holiday, in which he and his wife spent a week navigating a barge on the extensive canal system in that country. On Sunday morning, we were given a look at St. Helens wetlands by Todd Dudley of the local Landcare group, on the peninsula leading up to St. Helens Point.

It was a very good weekend for all participants, except that it was marred for Genevieve by the illness of her son Marc, who had already suffered bouts of the flu during the previous few days, and found himself confined to bed from late Saturday afternoon to mid-day Sunday. This prevented her from attending the Saturday evening dinner and after-dinner talk, and she was also forced to miss the Sunday excursion to the coastal sand dunes.

Discussing 1080: The Poison, The Sound, the Fury, and the Silence.

The last Bulletin carried some commentary on the issue of the use of 1080 poison to control vertebrate herbivores threatening crops, plantations and pastures. Since writing that piece we have received a reply from Parks and Wildlife to our letter of concern, and I have looked further at information sources. This time I will focus on the potential effect on the marsupial species that I know best, the potoroo, in the context of the 1080 issue.

In this so-called Information Age, one might expect abundant sources of information on such a potentially emotive topic. Disappointment ensues from the little information available, especially from official sources. Electronic searching of State Government documents reveals nothing. Documents like the State of Environment Report Tasmania, 1996, and the Regional Forest Agreement either ignore the issue or make the passing comment that "further research on alternatives is continuing"; apparently an oblique admission that there is a problem. Parks and Wildlife produce an annual report of amounts used, but this is the barest and driest of statistical tables; nowhere does a discussion of the wider implications of the issue appear from them. This is especially the case where forestry is the main context of poisoning. Their reply to the question "do users of 1080 have an affirmative obligation to objectively assess the likelihood of collateral damage to non-target species?" is effectively ignored.

Underlying local official reporting is scientific research carried out in the 1980s on the effects of 1080 on native animals. This calculated the median lethal dose for most potential victim species. It also concluded that poisoning resulted in severe suffering of different types for different species, but that suffering extending to cruelty was a common feature of 1080 toxicity. Largely on the basis of this research, the RSPCA in 1987 emphatically recommended the banning of 1080 for wildlife control in Tasmania.

The case against 1080 is possibly most obvious in the numerous graffiti displays around Hobart, and on that other medium of graffiti, the internet. Nonetheless, more serious efforts

have tackled the No case, especially the 1999 video Death by 1080 produced by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust. While giving many strong arguments against ongoing 1080 use, the film is prone to factual errors, e.g. that 1080 is toxic to the entire food chain", and exaggerated assertions, e.g. as to the efficacy of alternatives. The film did make some telling points, e.g. the ease in obtaining a permit by telephone (even in an area where the problem wildlife is interspersed with susceptible protected and vulnerable species). True to its "mixed bag" style, the film carried a postscript to the effect that Parks and Wildlife were invited to participate but declined as "they felt their views wouldn't be fairly represented".

The other major information source is a 1980 Report by the Tasmanian Wildlife Advisory Committee on the issue of 1080 use, to the then Environment Minister. Although a majority of the WAC were trained scientists, some extraordinary and erroneous conclusions were drawn. Perhaps the strangest was that 1080 is an humane poison, against the CSIRO evidence, apparently preferring the local vernacular that 1080 is a "quiet poison". Another was that because potoroos are "scrub dwellers" (?!*) and therefore, although sensitive to the poison, unlikely to encounter it.

To me the latter points exemplify much of the duplicity involved. Authority figures are used to sanitise and endorse rural myths that suit the current economic agenda. Objective science, with its concurrent obligations of thoroughness and consistency, is ignored, or invoked to dismiss "unscientific" criticisms, as convenient. The precautionary principle is not applied, instead the PR machines get the job of selling a fanciful and contrived story.

From the potoroo perspective, the statistics mentioned above easily enable one to calculate that in excess of 50 million potoroo lethal doses of 1080 have been deployed annually in recent years. They are found in a range of habitats, including wet forests, as well as the proverbial scrub. I believe that they have suffered very significant mortality in forestry operations. So strong is my belief that I would willingly wager a good proportion of my annual income against that of any executive in the denial industry, but I don't expect many offers on that score.

The principle conservation context of 1080 usage is collateral damage to non-target species, mostly marsupial herbivores and omnivores. Despite the preceding paragraph, I make no claim that potoroos as a species are threatened; they are well represented in reserves. There are, however, other species which have inadequately reserved habitat and are susceptible to 1080. Moreover, the habitat utilisation of these species has not been systematically investigated. The somewhat cryptic nature of such species makes their presence difficult to ascertain (or easy to ignore) unless affirmative searches are undertaken. Other problems arise from confined areas like King Island where potoroos were known 20 or so years ago but, with rampant 1080 poisoning, have not been reported recently.

In short, we have a classical conservation standoff with its strange mixture of ritual conflict, abject denial, and hyperbole. Our failure to better resolve or even discuss the issue is shameful. Rather than a "smoking gun" perhaps 1080 is a "fuming poison bottle".

Don Hird hirdd@primus.com.au

Excursion Reports

CLUB CATCHES NEW MILLIPEDE
MacGregor Peak, 9 October 1999, report by Kevin Bonham
MacGregor Peak (591m) is the highest peak on the Forestier Peninsula and is on the boundary of the new Abel Tasman National Park. About a dozen members completed a 10km circuit walk up the peak, along the adjacent ridgeline and back along Schofield's Road. Forestry operations near the start of the walk prevented us from finding the old track, and the firetrail through dry forest to the fire tower revealed little of interest. However, we were soon to pass through extensive areas of rainforest and mossy wet sclerophyll in excellent condition, where we made several impressive finds.

Among these was a new species of millipede in the genus *Asphalidesmus*. We found this very small knobbly-looking orange millipede under logs, but it was scarce, unlike other *Asphalidesmus* which are often abundant and communal. We also found a species of Lissodesmus millipede that hadn't been seen on the peninsula before, and collected only the second and third known male specimens of an undescribed (but common) Dalodesmid millipede (which obviously has a very low male to female ratio!). The invertebrate that caused the most amusement on the day, however, was a Nemertean or "proboscis worm", which greatly surprised those members unfamiliar with its unusual way of walking. Thirteen snail species were found. Astonishingly, a single medium-sized mossy rock near the summit revealed thirteen specimens of a rare undescribed *Cralopa* (previously known from only eight specimens) and nine specimens of the scarce *Trocholaoma spiceri* (range extension 65km) underneath. Neither species was found again on the trip. Another peculiar invertebrate concentration was the diverse collection of flies and small purple-yellow wasps which shared our morning tea break on the summit.

David and Genevieve collected another excellent haul of fungi (c. 25 species). Orchids were also plentiful, although nothing unusual was in flower. >The area is clearly of high value, and looking down from the ridgetop towards the ocean we could see areas of shelf rainforest that looked even more intriguing than the habitats we sampled.

TFNC Outing to Reuben Falls, 4 March 2000

Seven members and two visitors attended.
Reuben Falls is in a narrow strip of forest reserve along Isabella Creek, a tributary of the Weld River that flows into the Huon. After meeting at Tahune bridge over the Huon River, we drove 12 km along South Weld Road, accessing the reserve from the top. (A key is necessary to pass through a locked Forestry gate.)

The focus of the trip was to investigate the fungi and the vegetation in the rainforest on the track to Reuben Falls.
Because of the prolonged dry season, we had to hunt diligently to find our fungi, 21 species in all. We found most in the dampest part of the forest as we emerged from the vicinity of the waterfall. However, a group of *Calostoma fuscum* was seen and photographed not far from the start of the track.

Along the track we also enjoyed *Prionotes* and leatherwood *Eucryphia lucida* flowers. Other finds were raspberry-pink slime mould, yellow slime mould, a potoroo, skinks, and various leaf-litter invertebrates.
Because the flow in the river was so low we were able to walk in the streambed around the waterfall pool. Here we found mayfly and stonefly nymphs, an adult stonefly, and some egg-jelly cases under rocks. We also discovered some fossils of brachiopods in the rock around the pool. The waterfall itself, cascading down a 30 metre high terraced cliff with over-hangs, was well worth a visit in spite of the dry conditions.

Fungi found:
Paxillus or *curtisii*
Calocera sp.
Xylaria hypoxylon
Ascocoryne sarcoides
Bisporella citrina
Scutellinia sp.
3 species of *Entoloma*
Lactarius eucalypti
Lentinellus sp.
2 species of *Phylloporus*
Calostoma fuscum
Marasmius sp.
3 species of *Mycena*
a bolete species
Bolbitius sp.
Stalked hydnoid with pinky fawn spines on under surface

Fungimap Excursion - 8th April 2000
report by Anna McEldowney
The April excursion was held in conjunction with a meeting of the Fungimap coordinators for Australia who had already spent several days at Tyenna Lodge.

Forty-eight people (is this a record?) met at Maydena on a glorious morning and proceeded to an area known as the Five Road, being first diverted by the need to rescue a car which had slipped off the road near Mt Tim Shea. With at least a dozen different opinions on how the job should be done we basked in the sun and admired the view of The Thumbs and the cloudless sky before Tom Terry dragged the vehicle out of the ditch and two relieved English tourists went on their way.

The area of rainforest was relatively dry although there had obviously been more rain than in the rest of the south and conditions were good for fungi. There was a wide range of interests among our visiting experts; among them were Jimmy and Theresa who were searching for native truffles with ferocious- looking curved forks, Heino Lepp whose speciality was Corticioids (saprophytic fungi which live under logs), Bruce Fuhrer who takes the exquisite photos we have seen in fungi, lichen and moss publications, Katrina Syme who did the wonderfully detailed drawings for the book Fungi of Southern Australia. and Tom May from the National Herbarium of Victoria who is the National coordinator of the Fungi- map project.

Everyone was more than willing to share their extensive knowledge with those of us who are less than expert - from Pat Grey (FNCV) I learnt that *Clavicorona piperata* lives up to its name and the intense peppery taste takes a long time to go away!

We lunched at the Needles picnic area before exploring the nearby forest and the Fungimap people returned to the Lodge to name and catalogue their specimens.

The Fungimap project has a website with information and extensive illustrations of the target species at:- http://calcite.apana.org.au/fungimap . I have had a look and it is an excellent site with descriptions, distribution maps and Bruce Fuhrer's photos. David Ratkowsky would be only too happy to receive information on any of the target species our members may find in their travels or give you more information about the Fungimap project if you don't have access to the WEB.

Many thanks to all those who helped make this a successful outing.

For the taxonomically minded the list of fungi found on Saturday follows:
* indicates Fungimap target species

Maydena Toilet Block
**Amanita muscaria*

Needles Picnic Area
Merulius ravenelii
Chlorociboria aeruginascens
**Mycena interrupta*
Marasmius "horse hair" group
Calocera sp.
Panellus stipticus
**Cortinarius rotundisporus*
**Mycena sanguinolenta*
Mycena cystidiosa
Panellus longinquus
Dermocybe canaria
Dermocybe-small yellow/green
Clavicorona aff. *piperata*
Rozites fusipes

Five Road
**Omphalina chromacea*
Cortinarius - 2 species
Lactarius eucalypti
Russula "*persanguinea*" group
Armillaria novae-zelandiae
Pluteus sp.
Gliophorus chromolimoneus
**Mycena sanguinolenta*
* *Gliophorus graminicolor*
Russula with purple cap,cream gills, yellow stipe
Mycena cystidiosis

Laccaria sp.
Hygrocybe taekeri
Mycena epipterygia
Clavulunopsis miniata
Pluteus atromarginata
Hypoxylon bovei
Russula - brown stainer
Hygrocybe lilaceo-lamellata
Hygrocybe mavis
Hygrocybe lewellinae
Bertrandia astatogala
**Mycena interrupta*
Crepidotus variabilis
Tyromyces pulcherrimus
Hygrocybe aurantio-pallens
Crepidotus applanatus
Psathyrella sp.
Hypholoma brunnea
Corticioid or "paint"fungi -7 sp.
Fometopsis hemitephrum
Ganaderma applanatum
Lepiota sp.
Cuphocybe sp.
Entoloma - 3 sp.

New Books in the Library

Jones, D., Wapstra, H., Tonelli, P. and Harris, S. **The Orchids of Tasmania**, Melbourne University Press, Vic., 1999. 408pp HB

A detailed guide to every known orchid in Tasmania. Introductory chapters on habitats, conservation and notes on orchids are followed by a key to the genera, and a key to orchid leaves. The book is clearly set out with a page devoted to each species, including its description, photograph and locality map. These are preceded by notes on the genus, often with explanatory drawings and for the larger genera, a key a key to the species. Includes glossary, references, and index to the species and a checklist of the species, as well as an appendix on orchid taxa erroneously recorded for Tasmania.

Lane, P., Morris, D. and Shannon, G. **Common Grasses of Tasmania: An Agriculturalists' Guide.** Tasmanian Environment Centre, Hobart, 1999. 83pp pbk.

This book provides clear descriptions of the more common grasses in Tasmania, concentrating on those of agricultural significance. The descriptions are divided into three groupings, native/pasture, introduced/pasture and introduced/weed grasses. A double page spread is devoted to each species with a description and photograph of the plant as well as diagrams of identifying features. Although the book only covers a small proportion of the total number of species in the state, notes on similar species are included at the foot of each description. The book includes a glossary. Given that grasses form such an important component of our landscape, this is a useful guide.

Kantvilas, G. and Jarman, S.J. **Lichens of Rainforest in Tasmania and south-eastern Australia.** (Flora of Australian Supplementary Series Number 9.) Australian Biological Resources Study, Canberra, 1999. 212pp pbk.
The cool temperate rainforests in Tasmania provide habitat for a remarkable diversity of lichen flora. This book is both a guide to the lichens, beautifully illustrated by Bruce Fuhrer's clear photographs, and an introduction to their distribution, relationships, biology and the composition of the lichen flora and communities. Includes notes on identifying lichens, a key, glossary references and index.

Jarman, S. J. and Fuhrer, B. A. **Mosses and liverworts of rainforest in Tasmania and south-eastern Australia**. CSIRO and Forestry Tasmania, 1995. 134pp pbk.
This book is an introduction to the Bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) in cool temperate forests and other wet vegetation types. It is not an identification guide, and therefore does not contain scientific descriptions and keys, but is aimed at the non-specialist to increase awareness of a beautiful but largely neglected flora. Bruce Fuhrer's beautiful photographs should inspire us to take a closer look. Contains an index and glossary.

Kirkpatrick, J.B. and Harris, S. **The Disappearing Heath Revisited.** Tasmanian Environment Centre Inc. Hobart, 1999. 210pp pbk.
Chapters in this interesting book cover history, (including pre-human evolution of heath), ecology, different heath communities, the flora, significant species and conservation. Illustrated with line drawings by Georgina Davis and a few coloured photographs. A third of the book is taken up with appendices devoted to distribution maps and percentage frequency of species in particular communities.

Janet Fenton, Librarian.

Some last, presidential, thoughts;

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things
We murdet to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art
Close up these barren leaves,
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

Wordsworth