

TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

established 1904.

BULLETIN

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

Editor: Don Hird. (email dgh@dodo.com.au)

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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 68A, Hobart, 7001.

Programme

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; 62 289 702). Unforeseen changes sometimes occur.

Thurs. 5 May	<u>7.45p.m.</u> : David de Little will speak about Forest Beetles and their management.
Saturday 7 May excursion	<u>9.00a.m.</u> Depart from the Museum for a Fagus walk to Lake Nichols, Mount Field. Come prepared for all weather conditions.
Thurs. 2 June	<u>7.45p.m.</u> : Katherine Medlock from Tas. Museum and Art Gallery will speak about Thylacines and the global search for specimen material.
Saturday 4 or Sunday 5 June excursion	<u>9.00a.m.</u> Depart from the Museum for Dora Falls in the Huon, a short walk in a wet forest environment.

Thurs. 7 July	7.45p.m.: Katherine Medlock from Tas. Museum and Art Gallery will speak about Thylacines and the global search for specimen material.
Saturday 9 or Sunday 11 July excursion	<u>9.00a.m.</u> Depart from the Museum for Hansen's Cave near New Norfolk for a walk in the foothills of Mount Dromedary.

The Naturalist

Articles are required for *The Tasmanian Naturalist*. Our journal appears annually in October and includes a range of articles around the theme of natural history.

The *Naturalist* editor is Simon Grove phone 6233 8141 (W) or 6227 8509; (H);
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Articles can range from short reports to extended scientific articles accessible to interested members of the general public. Refer to previous issues of the *Naturalist* for examples of style and suitable content.

Obituary – Les Rubenach

Les Rubenach was a long-term member of the club whose special interest was native orchids, a field he was involved in for over 25 years.

Not only did Les make many significant contributions to orchid research (including the discovery of a new species now known as *Prasophyllum stellatum* at Storys Creek in 1992), but he was a very keen and skilled photographer of our native orchid flora. Several dozen of his photographs were included in the definitive work on the flora, *Orchids of Tasmania* (1999). In particular, Les took the photographs of *Thelymitra* (sun orchid) columns on pages 260-1 of that book. The column is a part of the flower that is about the size of a match-head and needs to be studied carefully to identify these orchids to species. This double spread of photos set a new standard for illustration of this feature and is, as the book points out, a great tribute to Les's skills and patience as a photographer. These same skills made the club's *Jewel Beetles of Tasmania* (2001), for which Les took all the photographs, possible.

Les actively shared his knowledge of orchids with the club through talks and excursions, and was always happy to share fine details with others with an interest in the field. In Les's case, the fine details were very fine indeed – his recording of locality information was meticulous. When he found *Thelymitra silena* on the Queens Domain (a remarkable find as the only other Tasmanian record was from Clarke Island and as no-one expected the Domain to hold such surprises for the orchid world), Les patiently described to me how to find the colony, right down to the dimensions of and numbers written upon the Telstra sign nearest the specimens. Needless to say, following these notes I found the plants without trouble!

Les's contributions to and passion for Tasmanian natural history were recognised in 1997 when David Jones named *Pterostylis rubenachii*, a very rare north-western Tasmanian greenhood which Les had been one of the very few people to collect, in his honour.

Kevin Bonham.

Orchid help needed!

Tasmania has 195 formally recognised orchid species, of which 68 are listed as threatened on the Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act (1995) and 32 species are listed on the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999). Under previous classifications, Tasmania was home to 35 species of *Pterostylis* of which 13 species were listed as threatened. At present, the recent taxonomic upheaval of the subtribe Pterostylidinae has meant that the conservation status of several species has been downgraded, upgraded or listed as uncertain within Tasmania. This situation has made it increasingly difficult to implement the management plans outlined within the Draft Tasmanian Threatened Orchid Recovery Plan (2004) and has highlighted further the need for taxonomic resolution, adequate baseline ecological information and an understanding of the evolutionary processes driving speciation within the group.

My PhD project at the University of Tasmania aims to resolve some of these issues through molecular analysis of the Parviflora complex. However, finding known populations of *Pterostylis atriola*, *Pterostylis parviflora*, *Pterostylis uliginosa* and *Pterostylis aphylla* is difficult and time consuming. If any orchid enthusiast should come across a population of these species', or any other *Pterostylis*, please contact me.

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Excursion Report: A beach walk on Marion Bay, Feb 2005 (Neil Klaer)

The group met at about 9:00am at the Museum on Feb. 6 on a fine, partly cloudy and windy day. After some car-pooling we agreed to stop and regroup at Copping, before driving in to Marion Bay. Near the Copping turnoff there was a bullrush-filled dam where at least two species of frog were calling loudly. Everyone agreed that since there were so few species of frogs in Tasmania that they should be readily identifiable from the sounds. [Editor's Note: these may well have been *Crinia signifera*, the Common (and thus well named) froglet and *Lymnodynastes tasmaniensis*, the striped Marsh Frog at the southern end of its range and able to be induced to call by clicking stones together.]

Black swans and a wedge tailed eagle were spotted on the drive from Copping to Marion Bay. Four of the group, Betty and Adrian Brettingham-Moore and Fran and husband Miller had brought their dogs and did a short walk before the rest of the group continued the 4km along the surf beach towards the Marion Narrows at the far end of the spit.

There had recently been a few storms, so it was expected that we would find plenty of interesting things washed up on the beach, and the tide was near low, so good for beachcombing. For the first 2km or so there was surprisingly little on the beach except for a few shells, and some dead birds including fairy penguins, fairy prions, little pied cormorants and black faced cormorants. We arrived at an area of perhaps 100m by 25m where a large amount of seaweed had been washed ashore and was piled half a metre deep in places. Kevin had walked ahead, so by the time the rest of the group arrived he had collected a fair assortment of shells, starfish, sea cucumbers and hermit crabs. Qug found a brittle star, and there were numbers of live scallops and cockles on the beach near the water's edge. It is unusual to find scallops out of the water like this, probably a result of the storms.

We continued on to the narrows where there were fairy terns – it was the end of the breeding season for them. Also, among the shorebirds were crested terns, pied oystercatchers, red neck stints and masked lapwing. Lunch was had on the lee side of a sand dune and the breeze was strong enough to blow sand into David's sandwiches. Genevieve, Amanda, Anna, Qug, Zoe and Peter McKay all checked their shell collections against the reference books that had been brought along.

We chose to walk back the same way we had come, as it didn't seem that there was an easy route on the western side of the spit. The biggest hermit crab was found on the return trip, and some gannets were spied diving into the water about 100m from shore.

The traditional beach walk and shell collecting trip was a resounding success again this year, so will probably take place at about the same time next year.

Mollusc List (compiled by Genevieve Gates)

Family	Species binomial with author	Common name
Mytilidae	<i>Brachidontes rostratus</i> (Dunker, 1857)	Beaked horse mussel
Mytilidae	<i>Modiolus albicostatus</i> Lamarck, 1819	White-ribbed horse mussel
Glycymeridae	<i>Glycymeris striatularis</i> (Lamarck, 1819)	Striated dog cockle
Ostreidae	<i>Ostrea angasi</i> Sowerby, 1871	Common mud oyster
Pectinidae	<i>Mimachlamys asperrima</i> (Lamarck, 1819)	Doughboy scallop
Pectinidae	<i>Pecten fumatus</i> Reeve, 1851	King scallop
Lucinidae	<i>Divalucina cumingi</i> (A. Adams & Angas, 1863)	V-marked lucina
Lucinidae	<i>Wallucina assimilis</i> (Angas, 1868)	Assimilated lucina
Cardiidae	<i>Fulvia tenuicostata</i> (Lamarck, 1819)	Thin-ribbed cockle

Cardiidae	<i>Nemocardium thetidis</i> (Hedley, 1902)	Thetis cockle
Mactridae	<i>Mactra rufescens</i> Lamarck, 1819	Reddish trough shell
Mesodesmatidae	<i>Paphies elongata</i> (Reeve, 1854)	Narrow wedge shell
Solenidae	<i>Solen vaginoides</i> (Lamarck, 1818)	Southern razor shell
Psammobiidae	<i>Soletellina biradiata</i> (Wood, 1815)	Double-rayed sunset shell
Veneridae	<i>Bassina disjecta</i> (Perry, 1811)	Friiled venus
Veneridae	<i>Callista diemenensis</i> (Hanley, 1844)	Tasmanian notocallista
Veneridae	<i>Tawera gallinula</i> (Lamarck, 1818)	Feathered venus
Hiatellidae	<i>Panopea australis</i> Sowerby, 1833	Southern gaper
Pholadidae	<i>Pholas australasiae</i> Sowerby, 1849	Australian angel wing
Patellidae	<i>Patella peronii</i> Blainville, 1825	Scaly limpet
Lottiidae	<i>Notoacmea corrodenda</i> (May, 1920)	Corroding limpet
Lottiidae	<i>Patelloida insignis</i> (Menke, 1843)	Maltese-cross limpet
Haliotidae	<i>Haliotis ruber</i> Leach, 1814	Black-lipped abalone
Turbinidae	<i>Astraliium aureum</i> (Jonas, 1844)	Golden star shell
Turbinidae	<i>Phasianella australis</i> (Gmelin, 1791)	Painted lady
Trochidae	<i>Austrocochlea porcata</i> (Adams, 1853)	Zebra ribbed top shell
Trochidae	<i>Bankivia fasciata</i> (Menke, 1830)	Banded kelp shell
Trochidae	<i>Calliostoma armillatum</i> (Wood, 1828)	Jewelled top shell
Trochidae	<i>Clanculus limbatus</i> (Quoy & Gaimard, 1834)	Keeled top shell
Trochidae	<i>Clanculus undatus</i> (Lamarck, 1816)	Wavy clanculus
Turritellidae	<i>Gazameda gunnii</i> (Reeve, 1848)	Gunn's screw shell
Turritellidae	<i>Maoricolpus roseus</i> (Quoy & Gaimard, 1834)	New Zealand screw shell
Batillariidae	<i>Zeacumantus diemenensis</i> (Quoy & Gaimard, 1834)	Common mud whelk
Cypraeidae	<i>Cypraea angustata</i> Gmelin, 1791	Brown cowrie
Cypraeidae	<i>Cypraea declivis</i> Sowerby, 1870	Freckled cowrie
Triviidae	<i>Trivia merces</i> (Iredale, 1924)	Southern ribbed cowrie
Naticidae	<i>Polinices conicus</i> (Lamarck, 1822)	Conical sand snail
Cassidae	<i>Semicassis pyrum</i> (Lamarck, 1822)	Pear helmet
Cassidae	<i>Semicassis semigranosum</i> (Lamarck, 1822)	Half-grained helmet
Cassidae	<i>Semicassis thomsoni</i> (Brazier, 1875)	Thomson's helmet
Ranellidae	<i>Cabestana spengleri</i> Perry, 1811	Spengler's rock whelk
Ranellidae	<i>Cymatium parthenopeum</i> (von Salis, 1793)	Hairy triton

Buccinidae	<i>Cominella lineolata</i> (Lamarck, 1809)	Lineated cominella
Nassariidae	<i>Nassarius pauperatus</i> (Lamarck, 1822)	Impoverished nassarius
Fascioliidae	<i>Fusinus novaehollandiae</i> (Reeve, 1847)	New Holland spindle shell
Fascioliidae	<i>Pleuroploca australasia</i> (Perry, 1811)	Tulip shell
Volutidae	<i>Amoria undulata</i> (Lamarck, 1804)	Wavy volute
Volutidae	<i>Ericusa sowerbyi</i> (Kiener, 1839)	Spindle-shaped volute
Volutidae	<i>Livonia mammilla</i> (Sowerby, 1844)	False baler shell
Marginellidae	<i>Austroginella muscaria</i> (Lamarck, 1822)	Fly-like margin-shell
Conidae	<i>Conus anemone</i> Lamarck, 1810	Anemone cone shell
Amphibolidae	<i>Salinator fragilis</i> (Lamarck, 1822)	Fragile airbreather

Recherche Bay / Southport Lagoon: Never-ending Story?

Previous *Bulletins* have mentioned this unique combination of Cultural and Natural Heritage and the merits of its conservation. This is particularly so in the context of the destruction by off road vehicles in the adjacent Southport Lagoon Conservation Area.

We have previously been assured by Parks and Wildlife that the level of such impact is unacceptable and that continued access is contingent on reduced harm to local environments. Southport Lagoon is categorised as a Class A Conservation Reserve of Critical Conservation Significance (<http://www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/RPIO-4Y44SN>).

We have written to Parks and Wildlife on this subject, and to National Heritage Trust who have granted some \$10 000 to 4WD clubs for remediation of damage to the Southport Lagoon access track, without explanation or evidence for how and where the funds were expended.

This issue is too important to become just another polarised standoff. Explanations in response to our letters will hopefully fill some gaps in what is already less than full disclosure. •