

TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

established 1904.

BULLETIN

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

Editor: Don Hird. (email hirdd@primus.com.au)

Bulletin No. 305 (quarterly) January 2002

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 GPO Box 68, Hobart, 7001.

Program

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. 7 February. 7.45p.m.: Carol Michaels will talk on "A Frog's Life".

Also, Chris Cooper, Co-ordinator of The Mountain Festival will speak that event, see attached details.

Sunday 9 Feb. 4.00?7 p.m.: We will visit Gould's Lagoon in what should be a prime season for frogs. Please note the relatively unusual timing of this excursion.

Thurs. 7 March. Annual General Meeting and President's Address.

Sat. 9 March. 9.00 a.m.: Duckhole Lake, which is on the first part of the track to Creekton Falls, south of Strathblane. It is a bit of a drive, but a nice easy walk with a picnic table and a lake at the end, and various natural history options available, e.g. tadpoles, fungi, snails, mammals

Thurs. 4 April. TBA.

April Excurs. TBA.

2002 SUBS. DUE NOW

Subscriptions are normally due by the end of the prior calendar year. Rates for 2002 are \$25 Single \$30 family \$20 concession (pensioner/student)
\$20 Naturalist only \$25 Naturalist only (overseas)

The Peter Rankin Trust for Herpetology offers financial assistance to worthwhile research projects on the biology of reptiles or amphibians. Committee members can provide details of how to apply.

EXCURSION REPORTS

Stone the thieving crows!

Whilst visiting Chauncy House at Chauncy Vale during the December outing (8.12.01), Chris Groves placed her day-old prescription sunglasses, in their case, on a table out on the verandah. She realised on the way back to Hobart that she had left them behind so they turned the car around and returned to Chauncy Vale to pick them up only to discover that they had disappeared. Several Field Nats could remember seeing them on the table but no one had picked them up to bring to the next meeting. Heather Chauncy was still at the house but she could throw no light on this mystery which was beginning to acquire the hallmarks of an Agatha Christie detective story (the president has been broadening her mind of late). Colin (the caretaker), whose little grey cells had been at work did some exploring around the house and found the lens cloth. A group of school children had visited the reserve a few days after us and he thought that if anyone would find the glasses it would most likely be one of the children. So, he rang the school and sure enough a boy had found them and so they were returned to their rightful owner. Apparently, (according to Colin Poirot) the glasses, in their case, had been removed from the table by a forest raven, *Corvus tasmanicus*. Colin said that the damage to the case had to be seen to be believed. The bird ripped the plastic covering to shreds and deeply scarred the case with its beak.

Apart from this incident, the excursion was most enjoyable, with the weather being so pleasant that the big and little boys went for a dip in the creek. The reserve is a wonderful place for a picnic with gas B-B-Q, shelter, toilets and plenty of tracks to walk including the one to the impressive caves that featured in Nan Chauncy's book "They found a cave". This was rather a lazy day for Field Naturalists although Kevin did go on a long snail hunt and David, Anna and I collected some *Agaricus* spp. that ended up on the B-B-Q!!

Gondwana Flora Expo Nov. 2-4

The Australian Plants Society biennial flower show fell on the same weekend as our usual monthly excursion, so involvement with our display took the place of an excursion.

We had our usual corner spot, and several hardworking members were busy on the Thursday preparing our display. Janet Fenton's magnificent backdrop of Australian dinosaurs attracted lots of comments, and fitted in well with the Gondwana theme. Gilbert van Munster, assisted by Tom Terry, set up a rainforest scene, with ferns, rock pool (the 'mock rocks' were painted Styrofoam) and even a waterfall. We had our usual display of natural history exhibits, including shells, insects and nests, provided by various members, as well as a dissecting microscope, which was well used by visitors to our display. Don Hird had prepared a poster showing the Gondwanan origins of Anaspides, and Amanda Thomson had a display of photos of Club activities.

Genevieve Gates took photos of some of the younger visitors to our display, and sent them each copies afterwards. We had David Stewart's new CD of Tasmanian bird calls playing most of the time, which created a lovely background atmosphere. Other Club members took a turn at attending to our display during the weekend. They were kept busy talking to visitors, and answering questions (Why is there a hermit crab under that fern?).

All in all, our display at the flower show was a great success, even if we do say so ourselves! due to the contributions made by many Field Natters. But some of us are glad that it's another two years before we need to do it again!

**The Mountain Festival: Friday 15 to Sunday 24 March.
Community Celebration at The Springs on Mt Wellington**

An invitation to the Tasmanian Field Naturalists

Did you know that 2002 is the United Nation's International Year of Mountains?

Tasmanian Field Naturalists' depth of knowledge and enthusiasm for the environment should be a valuable addition to this celebration. The accurate reflection of our Mountain's ecology and environment, as a unique feature of the Mountain Festival, will be made possible through assistance from a science consultancy. This group includes members of the scientific community who have detailed knowledge of Mt Wellington. They will provide knowledge of species and other aspects of ecology, such as animal behaviour and their ways of movement to ensure a wonderful depth of performance.

Would you like to build a giant puppet or other artwork as part of a free community workshop and then be part of a procession and performance at The Springs? Then, why not join in a series of workshops leading to the Mountain Festival community public day celebration on March 24?

Starting at the end of January workshops will be held at a variety of places including the eastern shore, Fern Tree and inner city.

Some workshops will be scheduled during weekdays, evenings and weekends. You, and anyone else who is interested, can choose to come once or many times, and can arrive at the starting time or later during a workshop. In other words, these community workshops are being designed to help you be involved as much as you want and when you want.

This exciting project will involve community artists Chantale Delrue, Gwen Egg, and Naomi Marantelli working with diverse community groups to build giant puppets, banners, silk flags, shrines, masks and other artworks that reflect the environment of Mt Wellington. These artworks will become part of a community parade and performance to be directed by Tanya Bosak. The Mountain Orchestra will provide music for the parade and performance and the Festival will feature natural history displays and walks. The final performance will include groups from the Eastern Shore, South Hobart Primary School, Mt Nelson Primary School, St Theresa's School, Cosmos and the Migrant Resource Centre.

Artists will be available to speak at the next meeting (Thursday 7 February) of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club.

This celebration has been made possible through grants and assistance from the Community Cultural Development Fund of the Australia Council for the Arts, Arts Tasmania, Hobart City Council, Wildcare, Tasmanian Regional Arts, Wellington Park Management Trust and the Mountain Festival Committee.

For more details or to register for workshops, contact Project Coordinator Helen Tyzack on 6236 9040.

Chris Cooper, Festival Co-ordinator