



# Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

## BULLETIN

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Quarterly Bulletin

No 333

Jan 2009

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. People of any age and background are welcome as members.

For more information, visit our website <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au>; email [info@tasfieldnats.org.au](mailto:info@tasfieldnats.org.au); write to GPO Box 68, Hobart, 7001; or phone our president, Janet Fenton, on (03) 6239 6443.

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### Program

**General Meetings** start at 7:45pm on the first Thursday of the month, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania.

**Outings** are held the following Saturday or Sunday, meeting at 9.00am outside the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery 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, please confirm the details, as late changes are sometimes made.

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|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Thu, 5 Feb</b>         | <b>Meeting</b> 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas.<br>Paddy Dalton from the University's School of Plant Science will present: <i>Bryology at 42° South – Mosses, Liverworts and Hornworts in the Tasmanian Environment</i>   |
| <b>Sat 7 or Sun 8 Feb</b> | <b>Excursion to Bruny Island</b> , to be led by Don Hird.<br>Day and time will be decided at the Thursday meeting. Check our website.  |
| <b>Thu, 5 Mar</b>         | <b>Meeting</b> and AGM at 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas.<br>Before the AGM it is customary to have a President's address; this year Janet Fenton will present ' <i>Solar eclipse expedition to Port Davey in 1910</i> '. |
| <b>Sun, 8 Mar</b>         | <b>Excursion</b> led by Paddy Dalton to <i>Dalco Creek</i> , near Lady Bay in southern Tasmania.   |
| <b>Thu, 2 Apr</b>         | <b>Meeting</b> 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas.<br>Dave Green will speak on ' <i>Soil mites</i> '.   |
| <b>10 ~ 12 Apr</b>        | <b>Easter camp</b> at <i>Koonya</i> on Tasman Peninsular.  |
| <b>Thu, 7 May</b>         | <b>Meeting</b> 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas.<br>Michael Driessen will present ' <i>When glow-worms turn it on</i> '.  |
| <b>9 or 10 May</b>        | <b>Excursion</b> to <i>Mystery Creek Cave</i> in the far south of Tasmania, lead by Mike Driessen.   |

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### Federation weekend

Burnie Field Nats are hosting the next Federation of Tas Field Nat Clubs weekend get together, this time to Cradle Mt. Accommodation will be the Blandfordia Alpine Club hut, near Dove Lake. The tentative dates are 3~5 April 2009.

If you are interested, contact the secretary Beverley Kolberg, PO Box 455, Burnie 7320; phone 03 6425 3572; or check <http://www.burniefieldnats.com/newsletter.htm> closer to the date.

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## From the President

- Janet Fenton

A big thankyou to the committee for their year's work in keeping the club running smoothly.

At members night in December interesting presentations were given by Anna on the Federation outing to Weymouth; by Kevin and Abbey on a visit to Prime Seal Island in Bass Strait; photographing into tree hollows, who knows what you will see, by Robyn Gates. I gave a light-hearted overview, with Geoff's photographs, of club outings through the year, while nine year-old Sam Driessen left us all in the shade with a very professional and entertaining presentation about club trips from a child's point of view.

Thanks also to those who helped set up a largely un-attended display for the Australian Plants Society show in October, and thanks to Gilbert, Betty, Nellie, Robyn and Qug who held the fort while most of us scuttled off to Weymouth to enjoy ourselves at the Federation outing.

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## Life Members

Congratulations to Julia Scott, Isa Hurburgh and Barbara Greenstreet, who were awarded Honorary Life Membership of the club at the December meeting, when they were each presented with a certificate depicting the TFNC platypus logo. Sincere thanks to these three members for their long standing involvement.

It is a long time since the club awarded a life membership, the two most recent being presented to Marjorie Wall in 1985 and Gilbert van Munster in 1988. The twenty-one life memberships awarded in 100 years from the club's inception are listed on p. 150 of our history, *A Century Afield*, the first being given in 1927 to eminent Tasmanian botanist, Leonard Rodway.

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## A sound idea: acoustic bird monitoring

This project is supported by Birds Tasmania and The Central North Field Naturalists. An archive of bush bird sounds will form an aural record of changing bird populations.

Many people are interested to know what birds occur in their area. They are also keen to contribute to monitoring projects but lack the necessary skills, particularly the ability to identify birds by their calls. Light-weight, robust recording devices with inbuilt microphones, requiring no technical expertise other than pushing a few buttons, are available for loan to participants. A network of people willing set up a recorder in an undisturbed habitat for a 20 minute period will result in a sound picture of Tasmania's environment. The concept has great potential for monitoring birds, frogs and other vocal animals.

Contact Sarah Lloyd, 999 Denmans Road, Birralee, 7303, ph 6396 1380  
email:sarahlloyd@iprimus.com.au

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## Mt Wellington foothills — 8 Nov 2008

- Excursion Report by Lynne Forster

A dozen Field Naturalists ventured into the foothills of Mount Wellington from the end of Pottery Rd where it is possible to traverse a number of adjacent eucalypt vegetation types by walking up the ridge and down the other side. The walk began in dry *Eucalyptus amygdalina* forest on mudstone which was actually permian mudstone formed when the area was covered by shallow sea with floating ice. When marine molluscs bryozoans and brachiopods died, they fell onto the sand and silt layers at the bottom of the water. This explained the number of Fenestrella (bryozoan) and Spirifera (brachiopod) fossils which Harry and Ben were finding. This site also contained the only *Allocasuarina monilifera* in the area. Leopard orchids (*Diuris pardina*) had finished flowering, leaving seed heads to mature, while *Diuris*

*sulphurea* was now on display. Several members spied a number of spider orchids not yet in flower and Kevin found a small, white, *Caladenia atrata*.

Shrieks of excitement from Robyn quickly directed our attention to a low tree hollow in which a nesting owl-nightjar was clearly not expecting a flock of curious Field Nats! (photograph by Robyn Gates)



As we entered dry *E. tenuiramis* forest on the ridge, ground cover thinned to low shrubs of *Tetratheca labillardieri* with mauve bells, minute, white-flowered *Leucopogon collinus* and yellow *Helichrysum scorpioides* straw daisies. The ground was littered with bark and small branches amongst which numerous grasshoppers and metallic skinks kept the Driessen family busy. Some of us observed several

rather large, brown, *Lepispilus sulcicollis* beetles on saplings while white tussock moths (*Acyphas leucomelas*) and their distinctive caterpillars with two red spots on their back were also discovered.

Down the southern side from the ridge, dry *E. pulchella* forest harboured the usual mix of *E. pulchella/globulus/viminalis*. It was largely in this forest type that narrow-leaved *Bedfordia linearis* was found. It prefers dry forest in contrast to the more commonly encountered *Bedfordia salicina* of wetter forest. A cluster of native dung beetles (*Onthophagus fuliginosus*) were discovered busily burying a damp patch of wallaby dung to provide food for their larvae when they hatch.

A bite of late morning tea was enjoyed at Noah's Saddle near the rubble from a former picnic hut believed to have been destroyed in the 1967 bushfires, before a rainstorm nudged us homeward via The Slides. Field Nats member, Nell Hilliard, recently told me how her father and his friends, as boys in the early 1900s, used to sit on tin trays and slide down the hill which was then grassy, and would hide their trays in nearby bushes at 'The Slides' until the next weekend.

Today we hadn't managed to descend the steeper southern slopes of the ridge through dry *E. obliqua* forest to wet *E. obliqua* forest in the gullies at the bottom. If we had we would have noticed very little difference between the two forest types. The ground layers of both are now dry and littered with dry twigs and dry leaves and bark. Yet 5 years ago the contrast was strong, with the wet forest floor being very slippery and fallen logs supporting numerous fungi. It was also darker then, owing to a thick understory of broad-leaved shrubs. Most of the understory has died and opened up the canopy, leading to drying of the soil as well as invasion of gaps by *Acacia dealbata*. I am interested in hearing from anyone who has, similarly, visited a patch of wet forest that they know well and recorded recent changes in its vegetation and wetness/dryness. Perhaps the rain which was now hurrying us home would help halt that drying.

## Observations

### Beetles (Coleoptera)

*Onthophagus fuliginosus* (Scarabaeidae) native dung beetle under wallaby dung

*Lepispilus sulcicollis* (Tenebrionidae) 25mm darkling beetle on foliage

*Isopteron obscurum* (Tenebrionidae) 10mm

*Adelium abbreviatum* (Tenebrionidae)

*Saragus costatus* (Tenebrionidae) pie-dish beetle

*Paropsisterna bimaculata* (Chrysomelidae)

*Paropsisterna nobilitata* (Chrysomelidae) with 4 spots

*Calomela curtisi* (Chrysomelidae)

*Gonipterus 'scutellatus'* (Curculionidae) eucalyptus weevil

### Spiders (Araneae)

*Ambicodamus sororius* (Nicodamidae)

*Delena cancerides* (Sparassidae) Huntsman

*Paramatachia tubicola* (Desidae), on dead twig

Nest of young spiders with longitudinal yellow stripes in web in *Daviesia ulcifolia*

*Badmunna* sp nr *martius*

*Stiphidium facetum* (Stiphidiidae)

#### **Butterflies and moths (Lepidoptera)**

*Paralucia aurifer* (Lycaenidae) bright copper butterfly which feeds on *Bursaria spinosa*

*Junonia villida* (Nymphalidae) meadow argus, feeds on plantains

*Acyphas leucomelas* (Lymantriidae) white tussock moth in *E. tenuiramis* forest

#### **Other insects**

*Bombus terrestris* (Hymenoptera: Apidae) large earth bumblebee (introduced)

*Cercophonius squama* (Scorpiones: Bothriuridae) scorpion, under logs

*Eurymeloides bicincta* (Hemiptera: Eurymelidae) treehopper

Cicadas were heard but not seen, so remain unidentified

Two species of Coclopoid copepods were found in the drying pond by Qug.

**Grasshoppers (Orthoptera)**, identified by Mike Driessen

*Goniaea australasiae* (Acrididae) gumleaf grasshopper

*Tasmaniacris tasmaniensis* (Acrididae) Tasmanian grasshopper

**Reptiles**, identified by Mike Driessen  
*Niveoscincus metallicus* metallic skink

#### **Birds**

*Aegotheles cristatus* Owlet-nightjar

*Pachycephala pectoralis* Golden whistler

*Colluricincla harmonica* Grey Shrike thrush

*Lichenostomus flavicollis* Yellow throated honeyeater

*Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera* Crescent honeyeater

*Malurus cyaneus* Superb fairy-wren

*Pardalotus striatus* Striated pardalote

*Phaps chalcoptera* Common bronzewing

*Rhipidura fuliginosa* Grey fantail

*Dacelo novaeguineae* Kookaburra

*Corvus tasmanicus* Forest raven

#### **Mammals**

*Dasyurus viverrinus* Eastern quoll scats

*Macropus rufogriseus* Bennets wallaby scats

*Trichosurus vulpecula* Brushtail possum scats

*Pseudocheirus peregrinus* Ringtail possum skull, found by Harry Driessen

(The ringtail possum is more closely related to the sugar glider (*Petaurus breviceps*) than it is to the brushtail possum).

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## **Christmas outing & barbeque — 5 July 2008**

### **- report by Janet Fenton**

Neil Klaer welcomed twenty-six members to the Christmas BBQ on his property at Franklin. At an altitude of around 400m, the property up New Road supports *Eucalyptus globulus* forest with an understory dominated by *Pomaderris apetala*. Some *E. globulus* umbels with three capsules were scattered on the ground. Other Eucalypts present were *E. obliqua* and *E. regnans*, while musk *Olearea argophylla*, native pepper *Tasmania lanceolata*, *Pimelea*, heartberry *Aristotelia peduncularis*, and some small sassafras were all present amongst the *Pomaderris*. Neil assured us that he has also seen celery-top pine, horizontal, and one only small myrtle! The orchid spotters recorded five species, Betty noting that the flowers were somewhat later than the same species at her nearby Geeveston property.

Progress up an access track into the forest moved at a mycologist's pace. Genevieve and David were with us again, with buckets and lunch-wrap at the ready for specimen collection. November rains had brought out a flush of fungi. The most crowd-drawing find was *Arsroe rubra*, the stink-horn fungus, with its red 'tentacles' and smelly brown spore-bearing slime; and some gorgeous little green *Gliophorus* sp. were popular too.

Tasmanian Devil scats were seen on the track, containing much bone and fur.

The forest was alive with bird-calls; Olive and Golden Whistlers, Grey Shrike Thrush, Tasmanian Thornbills and the peculiar calls of male and female Satin Flycatchers. A Spotted Pardalote emerged several times from the same scrub-patch close to Neil's house, and was suspected of having a nest there.

Neil fired up the BBQ and showed us around his almost finished solar house, independent of the electricity grid. Neil's electricity is produced by solar cells, stored in batteries and delivered via an inverter, giving him 240 volts AC; and hot water comes from a solar collector and/or a wood heater. The forecast showers barely eventuated while we made short-work of a sumptuous spread. Many thanks to all those who contributed. Black cockatoos called as we departed from Neil's eyrie with its marvelous view out over the Huon valley towards the Wellington Range. Thanks Neil for cheerfully putting up with such a large invasion.

### **Orchids** — Kevin Bonham

*Caladenia vulgaris*, *Chiloglottis cornuta* and *Thelymitra erosa* in flower, a *Pterostylis* finished and many *Corybas* leaves seen.

### **Invertebrates** – Lynne Forster

#### **Beetles**

*Percosoma carenoides* (Carabidae) large ground beetle

*Heteronyx tasmanicus* (Scarabaeidae) chewing juvenile *E. regnans* leaf margin

*Chauliognathus lugubris* (Cantharidae) soldier beetle

*Heteromastix perabundans* (Cantharidae) on dogwood (*Pomaderris apetala*)

*Crepidomenus* sp. (Elateridae) small click beetle on dogwood

*Callidircaea venusta* (Melandryidae) false darkling beetle on dry fallen dogwood

*Toxeutes arcuatus* (Cerambycidae) large longicorn beetle elytra next to track

*Alticina pagana* (Chrysomelidae) blue flea beetle and larvae on *Acaena novae-zelandiae*

*Aporocera viridis* (Chrysomelidae) on juvenile *E. regnans* leaf

*Monolepta* sp. (Chrysomelidae) on *Acacia dealbata*

*Neolaemosaccus* sp. (Curculionidae) that's as far as I got with ID of the weevil before it flew away; on fireweed (*Senecio linearifolius*).

#### **Spiders**

*Litodamus olga* (Nicodamidae) under rocks

*Stiphidium facetum* (Stiphidiidae)

Amaurobioidea probably Amaurobiidae sp. with pink herringbone pattern on abdomen including one looking very grey because it had just moulted. There were a number of these spiders under rocks, mostly guarding an egg sac stuck onto the rock undersurface. The absence of males has made it difficult to determine the species.

#### **Other invertebrates**

*Myrmecia esuriens* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) bull ant (endemic)

*Myrmecia pilosula* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) jackjumper

*Acanthanura* sp. (Collembolla: Uchidanurinae)

*Notius depressus* (Hemiptera: Pentatomidae) laying a green egg on fireweed (*Senecio linearifolius*).

### **Snail report**— Kevin Bonham

New Road was already well known to me as a pretty good area for snails but this was my most successful trip there so far, producing 13 species in a little over two hours' searching. The five marked \* are new records for the New Road area:

*Caryodes dufresnii*, *Tasmaphena sinclairi*, *Paralaoma halli*, *P. caputspinulae*, *P. mucooides*\*,  
*Trocholaoma parvissima*, "Allocharopa legrandi", A. sp. "Wellington", A. sp "Victoria Valley"\*,  
*Pernagera kingstonensis*, *P. architectonica*\*, *Elsothera ricei*\*, *Roblinella curacaoe*\*.

The most significant find was a new southernmost record, by about 15 km, for "Allocharopa" sp. "Victoria Valley". This rarely recorded (but in places abundant) species was first collected north of Ouse but all subsequent finds have been in an arc from the Wellington Range through to Maydena. On this

trip I found a single live adult under the same rock as a beautiful live adult *Roblinella curacoae*; both were photographed. There was also a 5 km range extension for *Pernagera architectonica*.

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## **Fanny Smith photo — help sought**

Dear Tasmanian Field Naturalists,

I am very much hoping that you may be able to help me to locate an image that I only have seen mentioned but have not yet found:

The Tasmanian Naturalist, Vol 2, Oct 1909, No 2, p22:

[in list of members who have exhibited]

"...ANTHONY, E.S.-Photo of Mrs. Fanny Smith (the last of Tasmanian Aborigines) and basket and bag made by her in native fashion."

[and other exhibits listed].

I really hope this photo still exists somewhere and is locatable. Do you have any ideas for how to find it? For example, do you know what happened to the collection of ES Anthony - or - can I be assisted to be in touch with his descendants?

Many thanks for any assistance,

Dr Julie Gough

Curator, Tayenebe - Tasmanian Aboriginal women's fibre exhibition

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

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## **Reminder from the Treasurer**

Annual membership subscriptions are now due. Rates are Family \$35, Adult \$30, Concession \$25.

If you change address and/or leave the club, please tell our treasurer, Anna McEldowney. Phone 03 6239 6326 or email [Anna.McEldowney@utas.edu.au](mailto:Anna.McEldowney@utas.edu.au)

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**Excursion photos** can be seen at <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/ExcnPhotos/ExcnPhotos.htm>.

