



Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

BULLETIN

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Quarterly Bulletin

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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 website <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>; email info@tasfieldnats.org.au; write to GPO Box 68, Hobart, 7001; or phone our secretary on mobile 0418 942 781.

We welcome articles and interesting photos for the Bulletin. If you would like to contribute to the next edition, please email the editor with your article or photos by 15 March.

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Program

General Meetings start at **7.15 pm** for 7.30 pm on the first Thursday of the month and feature a guest speaker on natural history (no meetings or excursions in January). Meetings are held in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania.

Excursions are usually held the following Saturday or Sunday, meeting at 9.00 am outside the Museum in Macquarie St, Hobart. 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 on the club website as late changes are sometimes made.

Thurs 2 Feb	Guest speaker: David Obendorf, <i>Toxoplasmosis – review and 2012 update.</i>
Sat 4 Feb	Excursion: Marion Bay . Meet at 9.00am at the Museum or 10.00am at Marion Bay Car Park.
Thurs 1 Mar	President’s address: Michael Driessen, <i>Roadside wildlife of northern Australia</i> Annual General Meeting will follow the president’s address.
Sat 3 Mar	Excursion: Peter Murrell Reserve (mammal trapping, invertebrate trapping, bird surveys and plant surveys). Meet at 9.30am at Peter Murrell Reserve car park next to Penrhyn Pond
Thu 5 Apr	Guest speaker: James Wood, <i>New Zealand Plants.</i>
Fri-Sun 6-8 Apr	Easter Camp: venue to be confirmed but Strathgordon is the preferred option. Details will be provided at general meetings and on the club website
For details of talks and excursions beyond this date, please check the website at http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/	

Subs due now

A reminder that 2012 subs are due from 1 January - please keep your treasurer happy by paying now! Subs can be paid by cheque to the Club address, by Paypal (follow the links on our website www.tasfieldnats.org.au) or by EFT to the Club account BSB 067 102 A/c 2800 0476.

Please identify your payment with your name and initial.

Family \$35

Single \$30

Single Junior or Concession \$25

4 committee positions to fill

Due to the retirement of four current committee members, the club will need to elect new committee members at the next AGM on 1st March 2012. The positions are Secretary, Bulletin Editor and two general committee members. Ideally, one of the general committee members will be responsible for maintaining the club's website. The committee meets six times a year and the meetings are held on Thursday nights before the general meeting. Please volunteer for a position by contacting Michael Driessen (TFNC President).

Cascades Track

Amanda Thomson

On a cool but beautiful and sunny morning on 8th October, about 20 people including children and visitors met at the Cascade car park. Initially the track cut through a mudstone slope with *Eucalyptus tenuiramis* and *E. obliqua* downslope towards a gully. As the track continued the understorey became heathier with *E. amygdalina* present. We crossed an unnamed creek which joins Guy-Fawkes Creek in Golden Gully. A picturesque stone bridge constructed with an unsupported arch crossed the creek. It was dedicated to Peter Degraives (1778-1852) founder of Cascade Brewery in 1824. The track then wound its way up the hillside to the top of Old Farm Road where we stopped for morning tea before heading back to the car park along the road.



TFNC members at the start of the Cascades Track.
Photo: Michael Driessen

Plants in flower included: native heath (*Epacris impressa*), golden pea (*Aotus ericoides*), blue love creeper (*Comesperma voluble*), yellow dogwood (*Pomederris elliptica*), white flag iris (*Diplarrena moraea*) and the wattle *Acacia vernicoflora*? In fine flower was candles (*Stackhousea monogyna*).

A number of orchids were present - the sun orchids (*Thelymitra*) not yet out and the mayflies (*Acianthus caudatus*) already finished. Orchids in flower were the bird orchid *Chiloglottis triceratops*, the dusky caladenia (*Caladenia fuscata*) and the greenhoods: maroonhood (*Pterostylis pedunculatus*), black-stripe greenhood (*Pterostylis melagramma*) and green-lip greenhood (*Pterostylis stenochila*).

Many birds were seen or heard, they included the: forest raven, shining-bronze cuckoo, fantail cuckoo, kelp gull (tip nearby), grey fantail, striated pardalote, grey (clinking) currawong, green rosella, grey shrike-thrush, eastern spinebill, brush bronzewing pigeon, crescent honeyeater and a male golden whistler. Janet spotted a Tawny Frogmouth roosting in a tree!

Grasshoppers found by Mike Driessen included: Tasmanian grasshopper (*Tasmaniocris tasmaniensis*), eastern tassie hopper (*Russalpia albertisi*), and pygmy grasshopper (Tetrigidae).

Other observations included the brown tree frog, a large twiggy remnant bird's nest in the fork of a tree, mosses, ferns and an interesting slime mould

covering gorse by the road. Huddles of Metallic skinks basked in a tree stump.

Alto cumulus clouds heralded the thunder storm that came later that night.

The find of the day was the furry-legged assassin bug (*Ptilocnemus femoratus*) by Kevin (well spotted at 1.5 cm). This bug exudes a narcotic secretion which is attractive to ants upon which it feeds.

A very pleasant, bountiful, close-to-the-city walk.



Furry-legged assassin bug Ptilocnemus femoratus.

Photo: Geoff Fenton

Federation: Murrayfield, Bruny Island

Michael Driessen

The TFNC hosted the get-together of the *Federation of Tasmania Field Naturalists Clubs* at Murrayfield on northern Bruny Island in October 2011.

The weekend was well attended with 38 field naturalists from Launceston, the northeast and Hobart. The weather around Tasmania that weekend was awful but we appeared to have escaped the worst of it with most rain falling at night. Here, I provide a very short summary of the weekend but a more detailed report will be produced later.



Field nats fossicking at Variety Bay.

Photo: Amanda Thomson

On Friday evening, we were welcomed and given an introduction to the Murrayfield farm by Bruce Michael, the manager of the property. Rodney Dillon made a special visit on Saturday morning to provide a welcome to country and to speak about

aboriginal values. This was followed by visits to: the ruins of St Peters Church at the southern end of the property, a walk along the Rookery Track to the Glue Pot—a sunken sea cave, the ruins of the old pilot station, and a walk along a rocky beach loaded with fossils. Later in the afternoon we checked Don Hird's pygmy possum nest boxes and we were rewarded with a mother little pygmy possum and her two young.

After a feast of salads, 30 steaks, 50 sausages and platters of fruit, some of the group headed down to the neck to observe shearwaters and penguins.



Bracken with grass tree backdrop. Photo: Amanda

Thomson

The weather was much better Sunday morning and after the cleanup we headed to the southernmost stand of grass trees where we had a lovely time exploring this unusual habitat. Most who were travelling north headed home around

lunchtime while some stayed on the island longer to explore further.

On behalf of the TFNC I thank the Indigenous Land Corporation and Weetapoonna Aboriginal Corporation for allowing us to stay on Murrayfield. I particularly thank our hosts Bruce

and Lynne Michaels who welcomed us to the property and Rodney Dillon who came over on Saturday morning to provide a welcome to country. And a big thank you to Anna McEldowny for organising the supplies for the weekend.

An unusual cricket

Simon Fearn

The large 40-45mm green cricket (or Katydid) *Caedicia simplex* is common in coastal Tasmania and thrives in urban areas feeding on a range of native and ornamental plants. The soft, single 'zzzt' call of the males can be heard at dusk in backyards throughout Tasmania. These crickets are normally entirely green to blend in with plant foliage where they secrete themselves during day light hours. Recently I noticed a number of



A predominately pink Caedicia simplex nymph on a red flowering Leptospermum. Photo: Simon Fearn

nymphs of this species feeding on a dwarf red flowering *Leptospermum* in my back yard at Riverside in Launceston. Presumably because this plant has purplish/red foliage and is covered in red flowers, the nymphs were reddish pink. But more unusually, when they had their final moult to adulthood, the wings were green but the body and legs retained the pink colouration.



The same cricket four days later after its final moult with normal green wings but maintaining the pink body and leg colour. Photo: Simon Fearn.

Scotts Peak—carnivorous plants

Genevieve Gates

Sunday, November the 6th was hot and humid — the sort of weather that tiger snakes of mythical proportions revel in among the scrubby, peaty vegetation that grows on the soils of the Precambrian quartzite bedrock of south west Tasmania. However, the fascinating talk on carnivorous plants of the Tepuis in South America at the Thursday night meeting by Darren Cullen enticed 19 members and friends (including a visitor from the UK) to explore our own native carnivorous flora.



Ken, Geoff and Darren Cullen (front) with Kevin, David and Peter (visiting from UK). Photo: Genevieve Gates

The term “carnivorous plant” was first used in 1760, in reference to the Venus Flytrap, a plant which Charles Darwin, in his “Insectivorous Plants” (published in 1875), considered the most wonderful plant in the world and certainly it has fascinated children and adults for many years since then. There are at least 500 different species of carnivorous plants belonging to about 20 genera in a variety of habitats all over the world (Camilleri 1998) and because of wider exploration many more species are being discovered. The term is colloquial and many of the species are not related although they do all have in common the ability to trap and digest animal prey.



Drosera binata. Photo: Genevieve Gates.

An abundance of water is essential for all carnivorous plants and they tend to grow in boggy habitats with plenty of water but with depauperate soils that are nutrient deficient. By devouring animals (the size of the trap is no doubt the delimiter of the prey size) these plants can supplement their diet and flourish in a hostile environment.



Drosera arcturi, large leaved form.
Photo: Genevieve Gates.

Tasmania has only two genera of carnivorous plants, *Drosera* and *Utricularia*, containing nine and eight species respectively (Clayton 2002), but bear in mind that molecular techniques may change the species concept of some of these species. They are not the large, breathtakingly beautiful plants of the tropical ecosystems but rather simple and delicate with exquisite small flowers but are equally as fascinating to enthusiasts from all over the world.



Drosera spatulata. Photo: Michael Driessen.

Our first stop was at Frodshams Pass at the turn-off to the Scotts Peak Dam Rd. Like a bunch of lemmings behind Darren and Miguel we leaped out of the cars and over the bank into the swampy ditch adjusting our eyes to see floating in a small stream the minute, green leaves of *Utricularia dichotoma* (aka Fairies Aprons) with intriguing bladder traps and on the banks, the jewel-like glowing red traps, lined with sticky hairs, of *Drosera auriculata*. At this site, Tim Rudman from Parks and Wildlife informed us about the water-borne fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi* which causes die-back in plants. The area was obviously affected by the fungus because the *Sprengelia incarnata* was looking very dried up and sick. This was a reminder that we had to clean our boots after walking around infected patches.

Further down the road, Gelignite Creek yielded several species including the small leaf form of *D. arcturi* as well as *D. binata* (looks like a little devil’s pitchfork to me) as well as more *Utricularia*.

We pushed onwards to Condominium Creek for lunch and then back along the road to the final stop at the foot of Celtic Hill to find some “spats”. Qué? Oh, *Drosera spatulata* and sure enough our intrepid leader found us some very good specimens halfway up the face of Mt Anne (well,

that's what it seemed like) as well as some specimens of the long-leaved forms of *D. arcturi* (at last, one of a size I could actually see!) and the very minute *D. pygmaea* with traps about 2 mm across. Meanwhile, those among us with a malacological or entomological bent were busy gathering data and an echidna popped up on the road to amuse Peter (our UK visitor). Darren reckons that we saw most of the species of carnivorous plants that we have in Tasmania on this trip except for a couple that we would pick up on the East Coast. It was a very informative day at

the base of some of the most stunning scenery in the world and enjoyed by all of us.

References:

- Camilleri, Tony. 1998. Carnivorous Plants. Kangaroo Press. 103pp.
Clayton, Colin H. 2002. Carnivorous Plants in Tasmania, Australia. 57pp.

Pelverata Falls

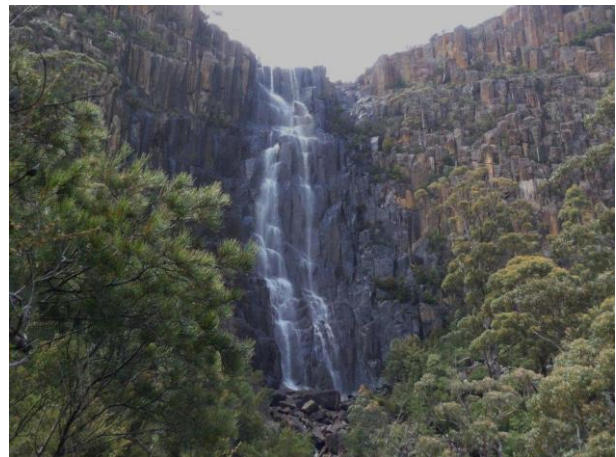
Evie Clarke

The slightly damp Tasmanian weather, apparently heralding the beginning of summer, posed no obstacle to the fourteen enthusiastic field naturalists who attended the excursion to Pelverata Falls on 4th December. The excursion began in earnest as soon as each person got out of their car and began wandering and observing in all directions. Two mating pairs of soldier beetles (*Chauliognathus*), an inchman and a jack jumper were found on a stump beside the car park. We set off as a group along the Pelverata Falls track at about 10 o'clock. The beginning of the track passed through a stand of tall slender gum trees. Not far along and in close proximity to the farming land beside, a young male Tasmanian pademelon lay dead on the track. He appeared to have been shot by a bullet in his side. Further along the track a ringtail possum drey was spotted.

At the sign-posted turnoff to the falls, the cries of a fantail cuckoo were collectively identified although the bird was not in sight. Other birds that were seen or heard during the walk and the return journey were a spotted pardalote, blue wren, black currawong, grey currawong, grey fantail, black-faced cuckoo-shrike, grey-shrike thrush, crescent honeyeater, thornbill, green rosella and a scarlet robin.

Closer to the falls the track narrowed and cut across a scree slope, yielding a marvellous view of the valley around. At about 11.30, we arrived at the platform at the end of the path from which we could see the beautiful Pelverata falls – gushing with water from the morning's rain. While many of us admired the view and gathered our breath, Kevin and Abbey began search for snails in the

surrounding area. Beside the platform a number of *Drosera auriculata* were found. An elusive thornbill zipped around the area however was too quick for the eager birdwatchers to determine the species.



Pelverata Falls. Photo: Amanda Thomson

There were many plants in flower identified during the walk, although I have great trouble remembering all their names, so I shall only mention a few! I thought it was amusing that *Goodenia ovata*, one of the plants seen, was named in honour of one Bishop Goodenough (and I am sure I will manage to remember that name!). Others seen were: *Baurea rubioides*, *Olearis sp.*, *Hibbertia empetrifolia*, *Dianella tasmanica*.

With our stomachs rumbling, we began the return journey at quite a fast pace – no doubt motivated by the thought of the barbecue ahead. The hail that was beginning to come down might also have been a motivating factor! At the car park we

reunited with the mycologists, Genevieve and David, who had stayed nearer the bottom of the track, and they showed us the samples they had collected. They had found over 20 species of fungi, including three fungimap species: *Anthracoephyllum archeri*, *Stereum hirsutum* and *Mycena viscidocruenta*. Conditions were a bit cool for any insect activity.



Guitar plant *Lomatia tinctoria*.
Photo: Geoff Fenton.

From the car park, we made our way to the nearby town hall and began to cook lunch on the barbeque. It was a fun social gathering to end the year, made even better by the delicious pie brought by Anna and Genevieve's chocolate cake!



Christmas treat. Photo: Amanda Thomson.
Cake: Genevieve Gates.

Fungi festival 2012

Fungimap and NRM South are organising a Fungi Festival to be held in Hobart from Thursday April 26th to Monday April 30th, 2012. The proposed program is a Symposium on Conservation and Management of Fungi (Thursday and Friday) and then on Saturday and Sunday there will be workshops and forays about fungi, similar to past Fungimap conferences. The Monday session is tentatively set aside for training in the use of the Atlas of Living Australia for fungi records data. The following weekend (5th-6th May), Fungimap, in conjunction with Cradle Coast NRM, will be running some more forays and workshops in the Tarkine. The following website: <http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap/home> will be giving updated information about this event.



Annual general meeting

Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc. – GPO Box 68, Hobart, Tas. 7001

<h2>Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers</h2>
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The 2012 AGM will be on Thursday 1st March in the Life Sciences Lecture Theatre at the University of Tasmania. The President's talk will be at 7:15, followed by the AGM, then a General Meeting.

Nominations are called for the following office bearers:-

President	Bulletin Editor
Vice President	Walks and Talks Coordinator
Secretary	Librarian
Treasurer	Naturalist Editor
	Three (3) Committee Members

Nominations should reach the Secretary at the above address by Monday 20 February, or be delivered in person immediately prior to the start of the AGM. A nomination form is attached below, but any written nominations will be accepted provided they contain the same information as contained in the official nomination form.

Nominations can also be emailed to secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au and the agreement of the nominee will be confirmed prior to the AGM.

Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club

Nomination for _____ (position)	Nominated by: _____
Name: _____	Seconded by ¹ : _____
	Accepted ² : _____

1. If this is left blank the Secretary will seek a seconder from the club membership.
2. Signature of the person being nominated. If this is left blank, the person will be asked at the AGM if they accept nomination.