

TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

established 1904.

BULLETIN

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

Editor: Don Hird.

Bulletin No. 299 (quarterly) July 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 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; 62 344 293). Unforeseen changes sometimes occur.

Program

Thurs. 3 August. 7.45p.m.: Zoe Tanner, an Honours student in zoology at UTAS, will speak about that feral species; the Lyrebird in Tasmania! Not only has the Lyrebird retained many populations on mainland Australia, where its extinction from foxes was feared, it has expanded its introduced Tasmanian range.

Sun 6 Aug. Excurs. 9.00 a.m.: We will visit Lyrebird habitat near Hastings or Adamson's Peak, the vicinity of Zoe's study area. Moderate walking is involved, although there is also the picnic area and National Park facilities for the less able.

Thurs. 7 September Peter McQuillan will speak on Insects of Tasmanian Mountains. Mountains often act as biological islands, particularly for those species that specialise in such habitats, and Tasmania offers interesting examples of this.

Sat. 9 Sept. Excurs. 9.00 a.m.: We will be joined by Phil Collier (see note on page 2). There will be a commemorative walk for Sue Collier, as well as exploring the theme of Insects of Tasmanian Mountains. We are planning a BBQ lunch at The Springs, so come prepared.

Thurs. 5 October 7.45p.m.: As this Bulletin goes to press, late changes have meant that the details of this meeting and outing will be announced by the September meeting. Alternatively, enquire with a club contact closer to the date.

Oct. Excurs. Saturday or Sunday, venue & time TBA.

Thurs. 2 November 7.45p.m.: Stuart Frusher from the Tasmanian Fisheries and Aquaculture Institute (TAFI) will speak on Rock Lobsters.

November Excurs. Koonya Weekend; 3-5 November. We have booked the University's Koonya facility which offers basic but adequate accommodation. There are many natural attractions on the Tasman peninsula in the vicinity of Koonya. Further details in the October Bulletin.

Tributes to the late Sue Collier

Many members will already be aware that Sue recently died in Canberra after a troubling time with illness. Sue, and Phil, to whom our sincere condolences have been conveyed, were active and enthusiastic members of Tas. Field Nats. over many years.

Members and other friends of Sue are invited to contribute brief written tributes. These will appear in the next Bulletin.

EXCURSION REPORTS

Excursion to Tasmanian Aquaculture & Fisheries Labs. Sat. 6 May 2000

Report by Don Hird

Ten members were shown around the TAFI complex by Caleb Gardner. Crayfish, *Jasus edwardsii*, behaviour was observed in outside tanks fed with seawater from the adjacent Derwent Estuary. Crayfish have hierarchical behaviour; usually the largest and strongest individuals occupy the prime deep crevices available. We were shown the collecting traps used to sample puerulus larvae at the settlement stage following their 18-24 months of larval life in widely-circulating ocean currents. The extent of such settlement and the species concerned are monitored and used to predict likely population numbers in future years. At the puerulus stage the young rock lobsters begin to closely resemble the adult form. Recently there has been a very significant settlement of an NSW commercial species, *Jasus verreauxi*, probably as a result of warmer ocean currents reaching Tasmania.

Another feature of the complex was the Stripey Trumpeter program. Large adults of 10-15 Kg fed voraciously; mind your fingers! This program is aimed at domesticating this local species so that it can be farmed in the way that salmonids already are. Raising the larval stages has proved to be something of a stumbling block so far.

Tasmanian Giant Crabs were observed out of their normal deep-water environment, and a bonus to a very informative excursion was a taste of this premium product to those who so chose.

Fern Excursion to Snug Falls – 3 June 2000

Report by Robin Cribbes

Ten members collected at the car park. We set off on a perfect, still sunny day, led by Michael Garrett, fern expert. David and Genevieve were combining the fern day with fungi collecting, carting a load of necessary equipment and found many species.

It was evident that there had been recent rains by the condition of the track, which was badly eroded in places. Not much in the way of ferns was found until we nearer the falls. We saw a man fern *Dicksonia antarctica*, a rough tree fern, *Cyathea australis* and necklace ferns, *Asplenium flabellifolium*. Don pointed out a ringtail possum nest, an untidy heap of leaves tucked into a tree fork. Robin found a bird's nest, very delicate, made of spider webs and moss, supported precariously between a couple of twigs a couple of metres above the ground. We speculated that it belonged to a silvereve or a scarlet robin.

When we got to the falls, Michael identified plenty of ferns for us high up and alongside the waterfall; *Blechnum nudum*, *B. volcanicum*, *B. wattsi*, *B. minus* and *B. chambersii*; coral fern *Gleichenia microphylla*, filmy fern *Hymenophyllum cupressiforme*, fork fern *Sticherus tener*, also many baby man ferns less recognisable at that growth stage. Anna found a dead wallaby in the rock pool at the base of the falls so we weren't tempted to drink from there.

Kevin found plenty of snails. *Caryodes dufresnii*, *Prolesophanta nelsoniensis*, *Stenacapha hamiltoni*, *Pernagera kingstonensis*, *Allocharopa legrandi*, *Elsothera ricei*, *Roblinella gadensis*, were all common. He also found a fine specimen of a symphylian, a pale centipede-like creature 2cm long which Kevin said is quite big for that group. He also showed us a velvet worm, a lovely soft black and a delight to watch.

John identified most of the birds for us. Superb fairy wren, dusky robin, eastern spinebill,

yellow throated honeyeater, grey fantail and beautiful firetail. Julia heard currawongs and a green rosella. Whilst we ate lunch a crescent honeyeater joined us, settling in small shrubs and clearly observable.

Springs Excursion, Mt Wellington on 8 July 2000

David Ratkowsky:

The July outing was scheduled to be held in the Lake Dobson area with Dr. Gintaras Kantvilas as leader, but illness prevented his participation. Although the morning of Sunday, 9 July was wet and rainy, seven members and friends met at the Museum, where it was decided that we could see plenty of lichens on "The Mountain". Thus, we drove to the Upper Springs Carpark, intending to walk to Sphinx Rock, down to the Shoobridge Track, and over to Junction Cabin before returning via the Lenah Valley Track. The presence of many lichens, and our attempts to match them with Bruce Fuhrer's photos in "Lichens of rainforest in Tasmania and south-eastern Tasmania" by Kantvilas and Jarman, meant that 15 minutes later we were still in the Carpark. About two hours later, we had only got to Sphinx Rock! However, during that time we had observed and identified several species of lichen, thanks largely to Anna, who put her newly purchased copy of the rainforest lichen book to good use.

At Sphinx Rock, we felt cold and hungry, so we made our way to Rock Cabin where Don and the others got a warming fire going and enjoyed our lunch, supplemented by a 250g bar of Roast Almond chocolate provided by Genevieve. A heavy rain-shower fell while we sheltered there. The rainy weather meant that the bush took on a myriad of subtle colours, with great variation in the various shades of green. The lichens showed themselves to be a handsome group of plants, their appearance enhanced by the subtle lighting effect produced by not having too bright a background (i.e. absence of sunshine!).

All participants seem to have had a good time; the inclement weather in no way serving to dampen our spirits. Thanks especially go to Anna, who kept the focus of attention of the group onto lichens. Below is a list of species that she compiled of lichens found during the Outing, all on the Lenah Valley Track between the Springs Upper Carpark and Rock Cabin.

Lichens found on excursion to The Springs, Mt Wellington on 8 July 2000

Anna McEldowney

Hypogymnia (3 spp.) *Cladia* (3 spp.) *Cladonia capitellata*
C. ochrachlora *C. pleurota* *C. merochlorophaea*
Placopsis gelida *Psoroma asperellum* *Bunodophoron* sp.
Knightiella splachnirima *Stereocaulon ramulosum* *Peltigera dolichorhiza*
Dibaeis sp. *Pseudocyphellaria faveolata* *Pseudocyphellaria* (3 spp.)

Fungi found on excursion to The Springs, Mt Wellington on 8 July 2000

Genevieve Gates

Cortinarius 'fuscous-bump'; *Trametes versicolor*
Psilocybe sp.; *Tricholoma* "grey"
Marasmius sp.; *Dermocybe austro-veneta*
Cortinarius abnormis; Two species of *Dermocybe*
Laccaria sp.; *Clitocybe* "grey"
Collybia butyracae; *Galerina patagonica*
Clavulinopsis amoena; *Bertrandia astatogala*
Heterotextus peziziformis; Cortinar "lilac"
Hydnium repandum; *Inocybe* "pale buff with orange centre"
Panellus longinquus; Cortinar "very small, white"

Aleuria rhenana Cortinarius sp. 'very deep violet with olivaceous gills"
Cortinarius spp. 'many species of various sizes, shapes and colours"

Kelsey Aves has compiled some fascinating biographical notes on the late Harold Sargison, a long-term club member, with particular reference to his prodigious efforts in organising Field Nats Easter Camps. The will appear in a future Bulletin.

Recently we received announcement from Parks and Wildlife of a project on working towards a comprehensive Nature Conservation Strategy. Submissions are invited; progressive reports and discussion papers have followed, and more are promised. Of the committee members who have followed this development (Kevin Bonham and Don Hird), we found that the claims of being an innovative program were somewhat dubious, as we see this principle as being both widely established and regularly neglected so far in Tasmania.

One example of an apparent shortcoming in this area ensued from an article in the Hobart Mercury on Barred Bandicoots taking cultivated truffles from farms in northern Tasmania. Apparently, the animals were astute at detecting and eating the gourmet fare! The farmers were not overly concerned – adequate fencing should protect their future crop. The Barred Bandicoot is nonetheless an important species in the Tasmanian conservation context, being on the verge of extinction on mainland Australia. When I looked on the official Parks website at the Barred Bandicoot species data no mention of its inadequate reserved habitat is mentioned. Underlying this is the problem that there hasn't been enough systematic survey work to determine the full range of their natural habitats in Tasmania.

It is nonetheless a very worthwhile process; interested members are invited to follow the thread of the Strategy, either through the club or directly.

Don Hird