



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 (03)62278638.

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 September.

Program	1	Bruny Island Excursion May 2012	4
Subs Overdue	1	The Ultimate Insect Shrub	7
Easter Camp at Strathgordon April 2012	2	The Tasmanian Naturalist – Call for contributions	8
A Common Urban Trapdoor Spider	4		

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 5 Jul	Guest speaker: Bronwyn Fancourt, <i>Drought, disease or destiny? Identifying the cause of decline of the eastern quoll.</i>
Sun 8 Jul	Excursion: Mt Direction
Thurs 2 Aug	Guest Speaker: Sally Bryant, <i>Pardalotes.</i>
4 or 5 Aug	Excursion to be announced
Thurs 7 Sept	Guest Speaker: Mick Statham, <i>European Wasps – history and life cycle.</i>
Sun 7 Oct	Excursion: Dunbabin's property – Bangor
13-21 Oct	ANN2012. The <i>Australian Naturalists' Network</i> is a group of field naturalists from all states which meets every two years for a get-together, this time in Canberra.

For details of talks and excursions beyond this date, please check the website at <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>

Subs Overdue

If you haven't paid your subs for 2012 they are now six months overdue. You will make your Treasurer happier by paying now! Subs can be paid by cheque to the Club address, by Paypal (follow the links on our website <http://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

Easter Camp at Strathgordon April 2012

Greg and Beth Heap

On Friday 6 April 2012, in great weather, 31 keen field naturalists set off for the Easter Camp.



Field Nats ready for the Easter Camp. Photo: Beth Heap

The first stop along the way to Strathgordon was at the Junee cave near Maydeena to see where the Junee River rises to the surface from the Cave system. A number of species of fungi were seen along the track as well as many birds and some lucky Field Nats spotted a platypus.

The Wedge Forest Reserve walk was next, followed by a search for some *Allanaspides hickmani* (Hickman's Pygmy Mountain Shrimp) at McPartian Pass. Michael's



*Michael Driesson checking the pond for *Allanaspides*.*

Photo: Beth Heap

fishing skills were up to the task and some tiny specimens were collected for closer examination with microscopes at the camp.



Allanaspides hickmani under the microscope.

Photo: Amanda Thomson

The excellent weather continued for a wonderful BBQ dinner at Strathgordon, beautifully catered for by Anna. After dinner Genevieve gave us a fungi presentation and Niall Doran gave a presentation on the Bookend Trust.

The weather crashed on day 2 but we persevered and spent the morning visiting the Gordon and Serpentine



Abseiler on the Gordon Dam. Photo: Amanda Thomson

Dams. While at the Gordon Dam we were able to watch a group abseiling down the dam wall. Some hardy Field Nats ventured up the very steep Mt Sprent Track that started next to the Serpentine Dam wall. After lunch the weather picked up a little, and with only occasional showers, we headed up the Twelvetrees Range track for spectacular views of the area.



Field Nats on the Twelvetrees Track. Photo: Beth Heap



At the top on the Twelvetrees Range.

Photo: Amanda Thomson



Elsothera sp. "Needles" (shell 5mm) found on the Twelvetees Range. This is the 8th known location for this western Tas species. Photo: Kevin Bonham



Juvenile Crayfish found on Twelvetees Range.
Photo: Kevin Bonham

This was followed by a trip to Ted's beach for some of the group – named after the Hydro engineer who artificially created the conditions for the beach to form by subsequent wave action.

Entertainment for the evening was provided by Genevieve with a convincing argument for NOT eating wild fungi and a presentation on South America. Peter Jarman and young Nick Plumb had set up camera traps around Strathgordon, and they showed us the results of this with some photos of pademelons. We were also treated to a presentation of Anna and Geoff's slides of the original Lake Pedder.

Our last day saw the weather deteriorate further as we explored the area around Strathgordon which included the old town, revegetation and Pedder Galaxias ponds. On the trip home we stopped off at Ted's Beach and then at the Styx Valley's Big Tree Reserve. Here we found lots of fungi and were fortunate to find a superb specimen of an *Aseroe rubra*.



Michael telling us about the Pedder galaxias breeding program at Strathgordon. Photo: Amanda Thomson



Pademelon at Ted's beach. Photo: Amanda Thomson



Aseroe rubra. Photo: Beth Heap

We then all went home to dry off after a very enjoyable Easter camp.

For a more detailed account of the Easter Camp, see the next issue of the Tasmanian Naturalist.

A Common Urban Trapdoor Spider

Simon Fearn

One of my favourite Tasmanian spiders is the large, silvery-brown trapdoor spider *Lycosa simonsi* the females of which can grow to 33mm in body length. These spiders are extremely common, even in well established urban areas, but very cryptic and not often noticed by the casual observer. They dig vertical tunnels in hard compacted soils and clays on open sites with good drainage and exposed to full sun, this includes many roadside nature strips and urban lawns. The reason they are so rarely observed is the beautifully constructed lid made of soil and silk that the spider covers its burrow entrance with. At night the spider will open the lid and await passing insects and will also sometimes make foraging sorties up to a meter from its burrow. The females are the larger sex and rarely wander far from their burrows. Males on the other hand wander widely on warm early summer evenings in search of mates and often wander into ground floor rooms and sheds. With practice it can become quite easy to spot their burrow lids on hard ground and in some places they can form high population densities. The following photos are from the nature strip outside my house in Riverside, Launceston.



The same burrow with lid open. Photo: Simon Fearn



The spider itself. Note the enormous primary eyes and in particular the ones set further back at the end of a groove which would act in much the same way as looking down a gun sight. Also note the stiff, black sensory hairs all over the animal's legs. There is definitely a wolf like mammalian quality to the countenance of this singular creature.

Photo: Simon Fearn.



Spot the spider burrow. This particular spider has been working on her burrow and this species deposits its diggings quite some distance from the burrow entrance-possibly to disguise its precise location.

Photo: Simon Fearn

Bruny Island Excursion May 2012

Amanda Thomson

Dire weather during the week lead to a forecast of clearing showers in Hobart. At the ferry terminal was the ominous sign of 13 black cockatoos heading north. However all looked good - clear, the sun shining! 12 adults, no children this time, we headed off in 3 cars. Arrived after 10 on the hilltop with views out to Cloudy and wasted no time in setting off. Lots of fungi were

evident following the heavy rain. Some were lucky to see the white wallaby close to the houses. Passing through grassy paddocks the track then dropped down to a path with in some places ankle deep water and much frog calling.



Field Nats at Lunawanna. Photo: Rosanna Cameron

Rosanna pointed out the vicinity of the tram track which in late 1800's transported timber from Cloudy Lagoon to Little Taylor's Bay. We passed through beautiful forests of *E. obliqua* and some *E. globulus*, and arrived at the beautiful vista of Cloudy Lagoon.



First View of Cloudy Lagoon. Photo: Amanda Thomson

With the tide dropping and lovely reflections, we headed to the left along the foreshore. We were lucky to have Simon Grove with us to identify the shells, and Kevin Bonham the land snails. Other memorable finds were 2 very attractive moths, a dead Sea Hare, Sea Hare egg ribbons, a variety of crabs and many birds.

Rosanna's fabulous retro caravan was a fitting venue for a delicious afternoon cuppa and cake. A splendid ending to a splendid day.



Cloudy Reflections. Photo: Amanda Thomson



Mollusc Collection. Photo: Amanda Thomson



Thalaina selenaea, Satin moth. Photo: Amanda Thomson



Gum Emerald moth - Prascinocyma semicrocea.

Photo: Amanda Thomson



Pebble crab - Philyra laevis. Photo: Amanda Thomson



E. obliqua forest. Photo: Amanda Thomson



Pylon remnants of the tram track in Cloudy Lagoon.

Photo: Rosanna Cameron



Afternoon tea at Rosanna's. Photo: Amanda Thomson

Land mollusc List: Kevin Bonham

Laomavix collisi, *Pedicamista coesus*, *Paralaoma* sp. "Knocklofty", *Paralaoma discors*, *Pernagera officeri*, *Helicarion cuvieri*, *Caryodes dufresnii*, *Succinea australis*. Also exotic slugs *Milax gagates* and *Deroceras reticulatum*.

I was surprised to find this was the first South Bruny record of *Paralaoma discors*, which is common on North Bruny. The most interesting record was *Pedicamista coesus*, normally found in much more exposed coastal environments. This was the second time I'd found it in a saltmarsh, the first being the club's trip to Lutregala in 2005, its only other confirmed Bruny record.

Mollusc list: Simon Grove

Thirty-six species

Musculus impactus nesting mussel
Mytilus galloprovincialis planulatus blue mussel
Crassostrea gigas Pacific oyster
Ostrea angasi common mud-oyster
Equichlamys bifrons queen scallop
Laternula rostrata Tasmanian lantern-shell
Fulvia tenuicostata thin-ribbed cockle
Wallucina assimilis common mud-lucine
Anapella cycladea smooth-toothed triangle
Soletellina biradiata double-rayed sunset-shell
Katelsia rhytiphora ridged venus
Katelsia scalarina stepped venus
Notoacmea alta tall limpet
Austrocochlea brevis short top-shell
Austrocochlea constricta ribbed top-shell
Phasianotrochus irisodontes rainbow kelp-shell
Turbo undulatus wavy turban
Batillariella estuarina estuarine mud-creeper
Zeacumantus diemenensis common mud-creeper
Diala suturalis sutured diala
Alaba monile spotted alaba
Maoricolpus roseus New Zealand screw-shell
Bembicium auratum estuarine conniwink
Bembicium melanostoma black-mouth conniwink
Polinices conica conical sand-snail
Hydrococcus brazieri Brazier's hydrococcus
Cabestana spengleri Spengler's rock-whelk
Cominella lineolata lined whelk
Pleuroploca australasia Australian tulip-shell
Nassarius pauperatus impoverished dog-whelk
Bedevea paivae mussel drill
Aplysia juliana Julian sea-hare (most likely this species, but could also have been *A. sydneyensis*)
Philine angasi Angas' bubble-shell
Salinator fragilis fragile air-breather
Phallomedusa solida solid air-breather
Ophicardelus ornatus mangrove air-breather

Further records of interest to me were, from Lunawanna, *Varicorbula gibba* (European basket-shell); and from Kettering, *Venericardia bimaculata* (splashed false-cockle) and *Clanculus limbatus* (keeled top-shell).

(These can be found in Simon Grove's book 'The seashells of Tasmania: a comprehensive guide'.

Invertebrate List:

Thalaina selenaea – Satin moth
Prascinocyma semicrocea – Gum Emerald moth
 Damselfly
 Copepods
Crinia signifera - Common froglet
Litoria ewingi - Brown Tree frog

Philyra laevis – Pebble crab
Mictyris platycheles - Soldier crab
Carcinus maenas – Common shore crab
Ovalipes australiensis - Surf crab

Bird List:

Black cockatoo
Black swan
Brown goshawk
Brown quail
Brown Thornbill
Crested tern
Dusky robin
European goldfinch

Fairy wren
Forest raven
Grey shrike thrush
Kookaburra
Native hens
Pied oyster catcher
Pelican
Richards Pipit
Scarlet robin
Sea Eagle
Wedge-tailed eagle
White faced heron
Yellow throated honey eater
Yellow wattlebird

The Ultimate Insect Shrub

Simon Fearn

For all the native gardeners and insect enthusiasts out there, the most amazing native plant I have encountered in terms of attracting nectar feeding insects to your garden is the dwarf form of *Baeckea virgata*. This small to medium shrub produces enormous quantities of nectar in dense sprays of small white flowers that are irresistible to any insects that feed on nectar. I have planted them throughout my garden and they do best (and attract the most insects) in a well drained spot that gets sun all day. The insect attracting power of this plant lies in its very long flowering period during the hottest part of the summer from January to April. This shrub has allowed me to observe and photograph a galaxy of native insects that I would otherwise never have seen in my suburban Riverside, Launceston garden including relatively rare jewel beetles that I have never recorded in Launceston previously.



I have had several specimens of the jewel beetle *Castiarina insularis* visit the *B. virgata* in my garden in successive seasons. Photo: Simon Fearn



A range of amazing native flies routinely feed on *B. virgata* including this 20mm Tabanid in the *Rutilla* genus.

Photo: Simon Fearn



Another regular visitor is the spectacular Tabanid *Formosa speciosa*. This species parasitises the larvae of the green and gold stag beetle *Lamprima aurata*.

Photo: Simon Fearn

The Tasmanian Naturalist – Call for contributions

Mark Wapstra, Tas Nat Editor

Yes, it's that time again when your friendly Naturalist editor starts hassling for contributions! It is never too early to make a submission – the earlier the better and the less my levels of panic near publication time!

So I encourage members with observations to contribute short naturalist notes, and people with more substantial data-based information to contribute more scientific papers - all are welcome as the forum has a wide audience and we try to please everybody.

Book-reviews and other contributions (prose/poetry/etc.) are also most welcome.

The last five volumes have seen the introduction of colour pages for several of the articles where colour illustration enhances the readability. The publication costs in the last few years have been generously supported by sponsorship from agencies such as the Department of Defence, Natural Resource Management, Forestry Tasmania, the Forest Practices Authority, and Environmental Consulting Options Tasmania.

This year's volume (134) will also be able to be printed in colour, but we will rely on sponsorship to achieve this – if anyone knows of possible sources, please contact me as soon as possible.

I need to have draft articles to me by not much later than July (for longer articles that may require peer review) or end of August (for shorter articles, naturalist notes and book reviews). The edited version goes to the printer in September so you can all have a copy before Christmas (we aim for October delivery).

The easiest way to get an article to me is via email (mark@ecotas.com.au), else mail to me at 28 Suncrest Avenue, Lenah Valley 7008 (or hand to me at a meeting/excursion). If you are wondering if something you may have an idea for is would be suitable, drop me a line. I'm happy to help with editing and review - that's my job!

[PS – the Club's website now has a link to a Guidelines for Authors to assist with style, format and content questions].