



# 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](mailto: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.**

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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.

<b>Thurs 4 July</b>	Guest Speaker: <b>Lisa Gershwin, <i>Jellyfish blooms and the future of the ocean</i></b>
<b>Sun 7 July</b>	<b>Excursion:</b> Woodvine – a return visit to see the re-growth after the January fires and to assist with the fungi survey that will culminate in an article in <i>The Naturalist</i> . Meet outside the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery on Macquarie Street, Hobart at 9am.
<b>Thurs 1 Aug</b>	Guest Speaker: <b>Vishnu Prahalad, <i>A virtual tour of Tasmanian saltmarshes: the eaten, the eaters, and why we need to retain manufacturing services</i></b>
<b>Sat 3 Aug</b>	<b>Excursion:</b> Lauderdale – to be confirmed
<b>11-13 Oct 2013</b>	Federation of Field Naturalists get-together at Port Sorrell – see details on Page 8
<b>18-26 Oct 2014</b>	Australian Naturalists Network get-together 2014 at the Lea <a href="http://tasfieldnats.weebly.com/australian-naturalists-network.html">http://tasfieldnats.weebly.com/australian-naturalists-network.html</a>

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 2013 subs were due on 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 <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

## Peter Murrell Reserves – March 2013

Michael Driessen

A good crowd of field nats turned out for the excursion to the Peter Murrell reserves. This was the fourth year of annual monitoring in the reserves.

In 2010 we established a monitoring program of mammals, birds, invertebrates and plants in four 20 ha fire management blocks. One of those blocks was burnt in autumn 2010. The main purposes of our monitoring on this trip were to clear the 40 pitfall traps that were set the previous weekend by a small group of field naturalists, and to survey birds. We were fortunate and grateful to have several expert bird observers from the Friends of the Peter Murrell reserves to lead us on bird surveys.



*The pitfall trap team. Photo: Beth Heap*

Once all 26 of us had assembled at about 9.30 we divided up into groups and headed off into the reserves. Amanda Thomson and Geoff Carle led one group to clear pitfall traps and Kevin Bonham and Abbey Throssell led another group. There were lots of invertebrates caught in the traps including in the burn areas but a full reckoning of the catch will not be available until all samples are sorted by Kevin and Abbey, which should be completed later this year and reported in the Tasmanian Naturalist.



*Enamelled Spider (Araneus bradleyi) yellow form.  
Photo: Geoff Carle*



*Blue-tongue (Tiliqua nigrolutea).  
Photo: Abbey Throssell*



*Mantis Ootheca. Photo: Kristi Ellingsen*



*Jumping Spider (Salticidae). Photo: Abbey Throssell*

Sue and Warren Jones, Tas Boskell and Andrew Walter led the bird survey groups and probably had to contend with more noise than they would normally prefer on their bird surveys. A total of 30 bird species was recorded, see below. Unfortunately our activities were brought to an abrupt end at around noon. After a balmy morning the heavens opened up when we were some walking distance from our cars where, for most us, our raincoats were. We were completely drenched by the time we returned to the car park.

## List of birds recorded

hoary-headed grebe  
great black cormorant  
chestnut teal  
pacific black duck  
hardhead ( white-eyed duck)  
brown falcon  
eurasian coot  
Silvereye  
kelp gull  
rainbow lorikeet<sup>l</sup>  
green rosella<sup>E</sup>  
tree martin  
black-faced cuckoo-shrike  
Blackbird<sup>l</sup>  
dusky robin<sup>E</sup>

golden whistler  
grey fantail  
superb blue wren  
brown thornbill  
yellow wattlebird<sup>E</sup>  
little wattlebird  
yellow-throated honeyeater<sup>E</sup>  
black-headed honeyeater<sup>E</sup>  
crescent honeyeater  
new holland honeyeater  
eastern spinebill  
spotted pardalote  
dusky woodswallow  
grey butcherbird  
forest raven

E = Tasmanian endemic species, l= introduced species

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## Hartz Mountains National Park excursion

### Anne Thwaites

Oh, what a beautiful morning – Saturday, April 6th – a clear, sunny sky, as 14 members and two children posed for a group photo in the Hartz car-park.



Field Nats Group. Photo: Beth Heap

Kevin Bonham, our noted snail specialist, lead us firstly up the Lake Osborne track, to the glacier plain, where he had first discovered the Hartz semi-slug, our main quarry for the day.



Glacier Plain. Photo: Ken Thwaites

This distinctive area contains several outcrops where the glacial ice has frozen onto the rock tearing out pieces that couldn't resist the pull of the moving ice – a Roche moutonnée example.

Members donned their gloves and pulled down their sleeves to delve beneath the large tussocks of *Gahnia grandis* (cutting grass) to look for the snails. Stunted but healthy *Eucalyptus Coccifera* (snow gum), *Richea scoparia* and *Astelia alpina* (pineapple grass) were all thriving here too. After half an hour of 'bottoms up' – no snails, but a few small millipedes!



Searching for snails amongst the cutting grass (*Gahnia grandis*). Photo: Amanda Thomson

The group continued on to Lake Osborne, passing a number of *Coprosma nitida* with their shiny orange fruit, a few small samples of *Bellendenia montana* (mountain rocket) still in flower, several isolated bushes of *Gaultheria hispida* (snowberry) and an abundance of *Bauera rubioides* – some with a few white blossoms.



*Coprosma nitida*. Photo: Ken Thwaites

The lake was at it's stunning best – a millpond – the water still and transparent!



*Morgan at Lake Osborne*. Photo: Amanda Thomson

A number of King Billy pines fire scarred remain on the shore edges. A wedge-tailed eagle soared in the clear blue sky, a perfect performance!

Returning to the car-park, Kevin found a snail related to the Hartz semi-slug.



We didn't find the Hartz semi-slug but this was quite surprising: the first Hartz record of a related species, *Victaphanta* sp "Western Arthurs" (aka *Victaphanta* sp "Weld") known from four other mountains. I had thought the semi-slug was the local equivalent of this species but it turns out both are there together!

Photo: Kevin Bonham

After twenty minutes lunch in the Shelter Hut, the group continued to Lake Esperance – Amanda photographing

numerous spiders, Betty grasshoppers and Kevin and Abbey delving for snails under rocks and more cutting grass beside the track; others just enjoying the still clear air of the Hartz environment!



*Orb weaving spider*. Photo: Amanda Thomson

On again to Ladies Tarn where Qug spied an *Anaspides* and all marvelled at the *Richea pandanifolia* leaves glistening in the sun on the slopes of the Devils Backbone opposite.



*Ladies Tarn Track*. Photo: Beth Heap

Turning, to retreat to the car-park, the huge billowing smoke stacks from four burn-offs, almost completely obliterated the sun; positively it provided glimpses of a golden tinge on some myrtle leaves; but what a contrast to the clear atmosphere of the start of the day!



*Billowing smoke stacks*. Photo: Beth Heap

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## Observations on the jewel beetle *Castiarina insularis*

Simon Fearn

"Whenever I hear of the capture of rare beetles I feel like an old war-horse at the sound of a trumpet"- Charles Darwin.

It seems there is jewel beetle fever in the air at the moment with the recent report of industrial quantities of *Castiarina insculpta* being located in the central highlands (Tas. Nat. Bulletin 350). It has been a remarkable season for several species in Northern Tasmania, especially for what is arguably Tasmania's most beautiful jewel beetle- *Castiarina insularis*. At 20-25 mm in length, these beetles seem to glow from within when seen in bright sunshine.

This species can be observed in naturalized urban gardens. Four years ago I planted out my Riverside, Launceston garden in native trees and shrubs and each summer have observed a single specimen of this jewel beetle on blossom of *Baekia virgata*. This summer (2012/13) however, their numbers greatly increased to a veritable 'plague' by jewel beetle standards with at least 14 individuals being present on both *B. virgata* and *Leptospermum petersonii* (commonly marketed as "lemon scented tea tree") another 10 specimens were observed at Legana, approximately 8 km distant from my garden, on mature *B. virgata* shrubs in an established native garden.

The beetles were only active for a three week period from the last week of January to the second week of February. After collecting a small series from both locations, I was able to observe individuals in my garden for up to a week at a time. They appeared to do little else but feed on nectar all day and bury themselves deep into flower clusters to spend the night.

One hot afternoon I observed three large *C. insularis* on a single specimen of *L. petersonii*. Two of the beetles encountered each other on the same group of flowers. The original beetle inhabiting the flower group rushed forward and savagely attacked the new comer, forcing it to fall from the tree and fly away to land higher up on an unattended patch of flowers. This unexplained behavior may possibly be a male-male competition, or evidence of females guarding nectar rich flowers from competitors, in turn increasing egg quantity or quality. I

didn't observe any mating in my garden, and as quickly as the beetles appeared, they vanished in mid-February even though blossom was still abundant.

Jewel beetle abundance and inter-annual variation is not understood. The question to be answered over the next few seasons is whether these beetles are much more numerous in some years than others, or whether the increasing maturity of my native garden and hence the increasing amount of nectar rich flowers is simply attracting more specimens. I suspect it to be the latter. Several specimens of *Kunzea ambigua* are now 2.5 m tall and carry impressive blossom on which I have recorded the attractive yellow and black jewel beetle *C. australasiae* in December 2012 for the first time.

A wide variety of jewel beetle species can be observed in Northern Tasmania. I have previously observed *C. insularis* in large numbers in the mid 1980's on flowering *Hakea teretifolia* in Asbestos Range logging coups, and on a single flowering *H. teretifolia* it was possible to collect multiple specimens of *C. insularis*, *C. australasiae*, *C. erythromeles*, *C. ocelligera*, *C. thomsoni* and *Themognatha mitchelli*. All these specimens are somewhere in the Australian National Insect Collection in Canberra.



*Castiarina insularis* specimens from Riverside and Legana, Launceston. These specimens are in the collections of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

Photo: David Maynard QVMAG.

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## Chauncy Vale Excursion

Margaret Warren

Chauncy Vale Wildlife Sanctuary, 40k north of Hobart, was established in 1946 and is one of the oldest conservation areas in Tasmania. The property is the former home of the noted children's author Nan Chauncy whose father settled there in 1914. Nan and

her husband Anton lived there until her death 1970. It has a rich diversity of ecosystems, varying from dry sclerophyll vegetation on sandstone to wet forest on dolerite clay. Before European settlement, Tasmanian Aboriginal tribes used the area as a route to and from

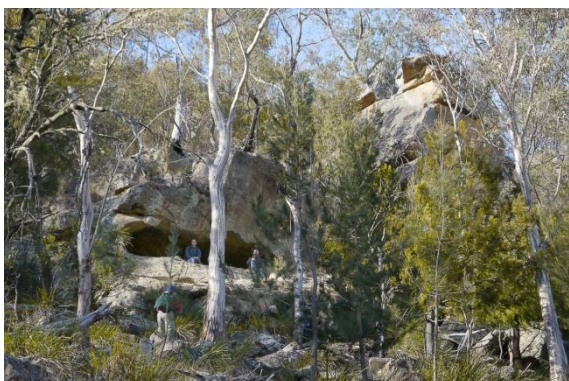
the East Coast and later it became a refuge for bushrangers.\*

Eighteen eager Field Nats assembled in the car park at 9.45 am on 8th June 2013. Despite the noticeable wind on the drive up it was very sheltered in the valley and perfect weather for walking. Genevieve Gates led the excursion and our main objective was finding fungi.



Field nats ready to explore Chauncy Vale.  
Photo: Margaret Warren

We set off along the Winter Walk then climbed steadily up-hill towards the caves. The terrain was extremely dry with very little vegetation due to lack of rain. The more nimble in the party soon reached the top and explored the many small caves dotted around the sandstone cliffs. We continued around the side of the hill on a narrow rocky path with a steep drop down to the gully below - a warning to tread carefully.



Exploring the caves. Photo: Margaret Warren

The main cave, which was the setting for Nan Chauncy's best known book and film *They Found a Cave*, is a large sandstone cave with interesting erosion patterns and not a single piece of graffiti! We stopped there for a snack and to divest a few layers of clothing as it was unusually warm for a winter's day. From there we descended a well-made rock path to the gully below. The river bed was completely dry although there was a little water in Eve's Bath and the deeper pools. Parts of the track were damp and we found a small amount of fungi but lack of rain had taken its toll and most of the specimens were undersized and dried out.

\*From Southern Midlands Council website.



Some people will go to any lengths for a photo!  
Photo: Margaret Warren



Psilocybe subaeruginosa. Photo: Geoff Carle



Crepidotus sp. Photo: Geoff Carle

There was very little sign of any wild life or birds, although we spotted the occasional wallaby and heard Yellow Throats calling. There were Scarlet and Dusky Robins together with Blue Wrens around the carpark area.

We continued to follow the Creek Track returning to the carpark around 2pm. All agreed it was a most enjoyable excursion.

**Fungi list from Genevieve Gates**

- Armillaria luteobubalina*
- Armillaria noveazelandiae*
- Bisporella citrina*
- Clitocybula* 'yellow gills'

*Cortinarius* 'large rusty yellow'  
*Crepidotus applanatus* (orange form)  
*Cystoderma muscicola*  
*Fomitopsis lilacinogilva*  
*Galerina* sp.  
*Geastrum schmidelii*  
*Gymnopilus allantopus*  
*Heterotextus peziziformis*  
*Hydropus* 'brown punctate'  
*Hymenopellis gigaspora*  
*Laccaria* sp.  
*Lepista aff. luscina*  
*Lichenomphalia chromacea*  
*Mycena carmeliana*

*Mycena kuurkacea*  
*Mycena nargan*  
*Mycena subgalericulata*  
*Mycena toyerlaricola*  
*Mycena vinacea*  
*Perenniporia ochroleuca*  
*Psilocybe subaeruginosa*  
*Pycnoporus coccineus*  
*Richenella fibula*  
*Tricholoma* 'pinkish brown with mottled gills and fishy odour'

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## Bowerbird – a new Australian natural history website

Anna McEldowney

The following article was abridged from an email forwarded by a Club member, Andrew Hingston.

A group at Museum Victoria has been funded by the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) to develop Australia's first website dedicated to the globally growing group of Citizen Scientists. There are only three other similar web sites in the world and all are in the Northern Hemisphere – Project Noah and iNaturalist (USA) and iSpot (UK). Australians wishing to upload and share their natural history images and have discussions about their images have had to use these sites. It was considered that websites like Flickr, Facebook and YouTube are not effective Citizen Science interfaces having little residual value as few of them upload data into aggregated and public natural history databases.

The Museum Victoria group has developed BowerBird - the name is a reference to the Australian birds whose males gather together objects of similar size and colour to attract mates.

During the development of this website and app they had in mind its use by both professional scientists as well as citizen scientists and saw Bowerbird as an effective interface between these two communities.

The Bowerbird website facilitates media uploads

- images (PNG, JPEG, BMP, TIF)
- sound files (.wav and iPhone .aac sound files)

- video links (linked from YouTube or Vimeo)

Projects (big or small) can be created by anyone and joined by anyone.

Members of a Project build its content through observation uploads, adding GPS coordinates and date sighted, making identifications, adding descriptive or commentary text and creating tags. Members can also vote for image quality or identification accuracy or effectiveness of descriptive text etc. Any member can comment, vote and add anything to any observation within a project - only the original uploader of an observation can modify the observation itself (ie. add more images, change title etc).

BowerBird is a fully networked, social science website.

All Bowerbird data is uploaded to the ALA dataset.

Bowerbird has a fully interactive Australian Master Names Species Checklist consisting of almost 210,000 individual species names across 7 Kingdoms. It can be searched by text for common or scientific name or searched by classification (phylum to species).

The **Bowerbird** URL is: <http://www.bowerbird.org.au/>

A **Bowerbird** user guide is available:

[http://researchdata.museum.vic.gov.au/padil/BowerBird/BowerBird\\_User\\_Guide.htm](http://researchdata.museum.vic.gov.au/padil/BowerBird/BowerBird_User_Guide.htm)

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## Federation of Field Naturalists Get-together

**11-13 October 2013**

You are all invited to a weekend of interesting activities and field trips at Port Sorrell hosted by the Central North Field Naturalists.

RSVP to Robin Garnett, email [robin@rubicon.org.au](mailto:robin@rubicon.org.au) or phone 0438 002 615

Closing date for bookings – Tuesday 1 October

### Program Outline

When	What	Where
<b>Friday 11 Oct</b>		
4pm onwards	Arrive at Camp Banksia	Camp Banksia Cnr of Pitcairn and Anderson Sts Port Sorrell
Evening	BYO barbeque Field Naturalists Quiz – Challenge between Field Nats groups	
<b>Saturday 12 Oct</b>		
Morning	Visit Phil Collier and Robin Garnett's conservation property, Rubicon Sanctuary	Rubicon Sanctuary 241 Parkers Ford Rd Port Sorell
Afternoon	Visit Hawley Reserve	End of Arthur St Port Sorell
Evening	Indian Banquet (\$20 per person) Talk by Phil Collier Threatened plant species in the Port Sorell area	Camp Banksia
<b>Sunday 13 Oct</b>		
Morning	Survey <i>Thelymitra antennifera</i> population at Narawntapu National Park	Narawntapu National Park
Lunch	BYO picnic at Narawntapu Nat Park	Narawntapu National Park

**Accommodation and home base:** Camp Banksia, Corner of Pitcairn and Anderson Streets, Port Sorell

- Bunk room accommodation - \$26 per person per night
- Some limited camping permitted - \$20 per person per night
- Bring your own towels and bedding including pillows
- Beach nearby for walking and swimming

**Cooking:** in shared small kitchen

- Saucepans, crockery and cutlery provided
- Inside and outside barbeques available
- Inside or outside seating for meals

**Meeting room:** is across a courtyard from the bunk rooms

- Chairs, tables, heating
- Tea and coffee making facilities

The Central North Field Naturalists look forward to welcoming you to Port Sorell and showing you the some of the rich variety of plants and animals in the area.

RSVP by Tuesday 1 October to  
Robin Garnett,  
Email: [robin@rubicon.org.au](mailto:robin@rubicon.org.au) or  
Phone: 0438 002 615