



Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

BULLETIN

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Quarterly Bulletin

No 355

July 2014

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 September 20.

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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.

Sat 14 June	Excursion: <i>Tasmans Arch to Waterfall Bay walk.</i> Meet outside Tas. Museum & Art Gallery on Macquarie St., Hobart at 9 am. Please note change of usual date from first to second weekend of June.
Thurs 3 July	Guest Speaker: <i>Dr Roger Proctor "Oceans of Data-Australia's Integrated Marine Observatory System"</i>
Sun 6 July	Excursion: To be announced.
Thurs 7 August	Guest Speaker: <i>Mark Holdsworth "An endemic Goshawk on Christmas Island."</i>
Sat 9 August	Excursion: possibly to Craig Webb's Raptor Refuge Park. To be confirmed.
Thurs 4 Sept	Guest Speaker: To be announced
Sat 6 Sept	Excursion: To be announced
Thurs 2 Oct	Guest Speaker: <i>John Douglas, author of "Webs: A Guide to Tasmanian Spiders"</i>
18-26 Oct	Australian Naturalists Network get-together 2014 at the Lea http://tasfieldnats.weebly.com/australian-naturalists-network.html

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 2014 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

Kingston Excursion 5 April

Els Wakefield and Sue Robinson

The group was led by Sue Robinson and Mark Holdsworth and attended by 12 others;

Beth and Greg Heap, Amanda Thompson, Kristi Ellingsen, John Rosendal, Sabine Borgus, Carol Timbrell, Anne Paizs, Kevin Bonham, Abbey Throssel, Maggie Cashman-Bailes and Els Wakefield.



Mark and Sue. Photos Els Wakefield

We all met at the bridge near the mouth of Browns River where a Little Pied Cormorant was drying its wings on a wire above the river. Before starting, Mark gave a short talk about binoculars, how to use them, how to choose a suitable pair and where to purchase them.



Little Pied Cormorant. Photo Els Wakefield

We then walked up the Alum Cliffs track along the boardwalk where we were treated to some great eye-level views of birds. Conditions were calm but overcast and the light was poor. Nevertheless, we saw almost every honeyeater that occurs in Tasmania as well as Spotted Pardalotes and one Beautiful Firetail. In addition there were excellent views of the target species, the Rainbow Lorikeets perched at eye level and flying overhead as well as Musk Lorikeets, Green and Eastern Rosellas, Galahs, Little Corellas and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos.

The group returned slowly down Tyndall Rd while some hung back to photograph the insect life. At the bridge, the Cormorant was still at the same spot grooming its feathers. From there we walked to Balmoral Rd past a

garden birch tree with resting Rainbow Lorikeets undisturbed by our presence.



Rainbow Lorikeet. Photo Els Wakefield

Special thanks to Mark and Sue for the good views and a better understanding of the issues involved with these colourful characters.



Swift Parrot. Photo Mick Brown



Musk Lorikeet. Photo: Mick Brown

Note

The excursion to Kingston followed the interesting presentation from Sue Robinson about the introduction of Rainbow Lorikeets to Tasmania. Regarded as a pest species in Tasmania, the small population establishing at Kingston may result from aviary escapes or intentional releases. Their natural range is mainland Australia, and parts of Indonesia and New Guinea. They are aggressive, adaptable and fast breeding and if they establish they will be very difficult to eliminate and will become a threat to our native Musk Lorikeet, Swift Parrot and Green Rosella.

The Rainbow Lorikeet has distinctive bright blue 'scaly' feathers on the head.

See the back page for information about how you can assist in research into another threat to our endangered Swift Parrots.

There is more information available on the DPIPWE Invasive Species Branch website, including a detailed description of the appearance of the Rainbow Lorikeet.

<http://dpiipwe.tas.gov.au/invasive-species/invasive-animals/invasive-birds/rainbow-lorikeet>

Mt Field Excursion 3 May

Kevin Bonham

The turnout for the Mt Field waterfalls circuit walk (Russell, Horseshoe and Lady Barron Falls) was a modest one at seven. I doubt it was the slightly dodgy weather forecast that scared people off; it just seemed almost everyone was busy that weekend.

As it turned out it was a pleasant day and we were not rained on in the field. The walk was off to a typical Field Nats start when we went the wrong way out of the carpark, leading me to a clearing with an amazing piece of bark that had dozens of small snails crawling under it (*Paralaoma discors* and *P. sp* "Knocklofty" and one *Trocholaoma parvissima*).

Eventually we walked rather slowly around the track with a fair amount of time spent identifying the understorey trees.

The hoped-for pink robin sighting did not eventuate but we did see quite a few scrubwrens in the Tall Trees section of the walk.

We had a late lunch near Lady Barron Falls and though the sun was out it was surprisingly dark on the forest floor.

I hadn't done this walk since a club trip there back in 1998, and on return from Lady Barron Falls was surprised to find that the track no longer follows the river but instead climbs steeply over the cliffs up a large wooden stair section. The new return track goes through a section of quite open forest that is scheduled for fuel-load reduction burning.

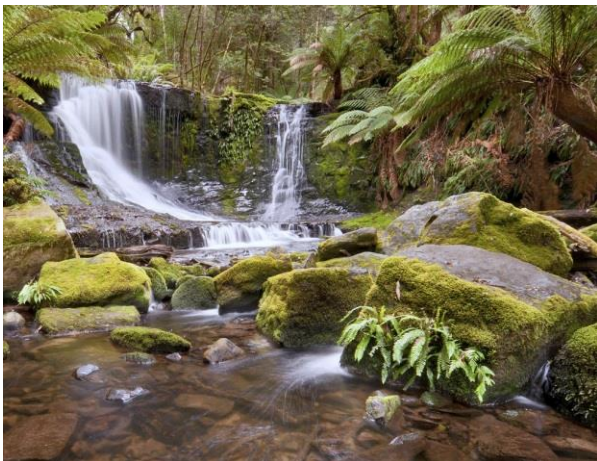


Track to Horseshoe Falls. Photo: Beth Heap

The rest of the day was a quiet one for snails with only four further additions.

Snails:

Allocharopa sp,
Pernagera kingstonensis
Helicarion cuvieri
Stenacapha hamiltoni
Paralaoma discors
Paralaoma. sp "Knocklofty"
Trocholaoma parvissima



Horseshoe Falls. Photo Beth Heap

On the way back to Hobart we visited the Salmon Ponds open day but the resident platypus was nowhere to be seen.

Easter Camp 18-20 April 2014

Genevieve Gates



Easter camp attendees. Photo Amanda Thomson

Easter Camp attendees:

Kevin Bonham, Abbey Throssell, Genevieve Gates, David Ratkowsky, Amanda Thomson, Anna McEldowney, Ellingsen family (Kristi, Simon, Henry, Tilly and Theo), Wheatley family (Mandi, Simon, Tilly and Morgan), Chris Spencer, Karen Richardson, Janet and Geoff Fenton, Don Hird, Bob Mesibov, John Rosendale and Sabine Borgis.

The TFNC Easter Camp was held from 18th-20th April at The Scotch-Oakburn College Valley Campus, Rostrevor, a property ca. 14 km east of Avoca on the Esk highway.

After leaving Hobart on Good Friday morning the dark ominous skies gave way to a wild storm which made for some very careful driving especially after we saw the nasty accidents on the Midlands highway north and south of Campbell Town which resulted in long traffic delays. We were quite relieved to reach the camp with its very comfortable sleeping, cooking and living quarters set amid silver birches and other exotics and native eucalypts beside a man-made lake dotted with black swans.

We hugged the huge open fire that Ben the caretaker had lit in the communal building, drinking cups of tea and waiting for the others members to arrive and settle in. The rain ceased and about mid-afternoon and the sun came out. As everyone who said they were coming up on Friday had arrived we set to explore Rajah Rock.

Good Friday - Rajah Rock Walk



On Rajah Rock. Photo Amanda Thomson

This is a short easy climb with spectacular views of the Fingal Valley and the South Esk River. The vegetation on the granite substrate is typical of dry open woodland

dominated by *Eucalyptus amygdalina* and *E. viminalis* with *Allocasuarina* and shrubby *Leptomeria*. The ground cover consisted primarily of two prickly *Astroloma* species which were both in flower, one *A. pinifolium* has a long yellow corolla with a green tip and the other *A. humifusum* has a smaller red corolla. Another prickly was *Leucopogon virgatus*.

Some interesting plants were *Acacia axillaris* which is rare and endangered and *A. gunnii*. It was the wrong time of the year to find the rare *Caladenia congesta* (blacktongue finger-orchid) but orchid leaves were common in the patches of moss and even a fern had a firm foothold in the rocks. Brown *Leptorhynchus* heads were a reminder that summer was truly over. Surprisingly (given the dry conditions over the past few weeks) there were some fungi including the fascinating *Omphalotus nidiformis* (the Ghost fungus) which is renowned for its luminescence at night. This was collected to put in a plastic bag to verify its claim to fame when it got dark. We returned to the camp to have a meal, identify our collections and go star-gazing with Simon Ellingsen on the oval or looking for bats with the bat locator.

Rajah Rock species list

Scarlet robin

Spotted marsh frog - a bit out of place on Rajah Rock!



Spot the frog!

Spotted Marsh Frog. Photo Kristi Ellingsen

Fungi:

Calocera guepinioides

Clitopilus aff. *hobsonii*

Galerina sp.

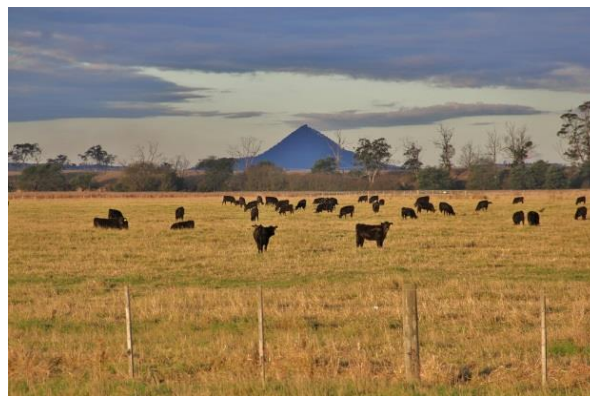
Heterotextus peziziformis

Inocybe redolens

Omphalotus nidiformis

On the snail trail Kevin found 2 specimens of one species *Scelidoropa* sp. A 'most unremarkable species' quote Bonham (2014) that is prolific in the east of the state.

Saturday – St Patrick’s Head walk



St Patricks Head. Photo Amanda Thomson

On Saturday we took off in fine weather for St Patricks Head, a towering land feature dominating the sky-line as one drives towards St Marys. Before we left I took a stroll to the river behind the camp and found *Leucoagaricus naucinus*, a mushroom-like fungus similar to an *Agaricus* species except that the spore print is white and the gills remain white. It is easily confused with a field mushroom especially as it shares the same habitat but could make one sick if ingested.

The first kilometre of the track to St Patrick’s Head passes through degraded native bush and pasture with patches of eucalypt plantations. It enters wet eucalypt forest inhabited by tender, loving leeches and gently goes uphill, becoming very steep at the base of a huge rocky outcrop. The fungi abruptly petered out at this point and so did I, but most of the group made it to the 694 m summit and enjoyed their lunch atop with wonderful views to the coast. According to Kevin this place is excellent for snails. I hope it came up to his expectations.

Snails:

Caryodes dufresnii

Helicarion cf *cuvieri*

Tasmaphena quaestiosa

Prolesophanta “*Strzelecki*”*,

Laomavix collisi

Paralaoma discors

Paralaoma “*Knocklofty*”*

Paralaoma halli

Paralaoma hobarti

Dentherona subrugosa

Elsothera “*Ericksons*”*

Scelidoropa “*Paradise*”

Scelidoropa “*St Marys*”

Scelidoropa “*St Patricks*” (rare sp known from 2 localities)

Allocharopa “*Douglas*”

Thryasona diemenensis

Punctidae “*Micro Cripps*”*

Kevin Bonham's comments on the snail list: Those marked * were new records for St Patricks Head. *Elsothera* sp "Ericksons", the sole specimen of which was found by Amanda, was the most notable of the new records –it was the 7th locality for this species which is endemic to the St Helens to St Marys area.

St Patricks Head is the best snail site I'm aware of on the northern east coast; the deep dolerite scree provides superb protection from fires, and I found that the major fire a few years ago had had little if any impact on diversity or abundance compared to my last trip there in 1990.

Fungi:

- Boletus tasmanicus*
- Bovista brunnea*
- Cheilymenia coprinaria* and *Coprinus* sp. on a cow pat.
- Clitocybe semiocculta*
- Clitopilus pseudopiperitus*
- Entoloma readiae*
- Entoloma readiae* var. *sulphureum*
- Galerina* sp.
- Gymnopilus ferruginosus*
- Gymnopus* 'brown frilly'
- Hypholoma fasciculare* var. *fasciculare*
- Lepiota* sp.
- Leucocoprinus* sp.
- Marasmius elegans*
- Melanotus hepatochrous*
- Mycena austrofilopes*
- Mycena kuurkacea*
- Mycena marangania*
- Mycena subgalericulata*
- Mycena viscidocruenta*
- Oudemansiella gigaspora*
- Panellus stipticus*
- Pluteus* aff. *romellii*
- Pluteus atromarginatus*
- Psathyrella* spp.
- Psilocybe subaeruginosa*
- Scleroderma cepa*
- Trametes versicolor*
- Tremella fuciformis*
- Tricholomopsis* aff. *Decora*



"Fungi-induced happiness" Photo Kristi Ellingsen

Birds:

- Wedge-tailed Eagle
- Grey Fantail
- Golden Whistler
- Grey Shrike-thrush

Invertebrates:

- Giant pill millipede
- Green ichneumonid wasp

Plants of interest

- Drymophila cyanocarpa*
- Correa lawrencii*

Mathinna Falls

The walk up St Pat's didn't wear the members out so after lunch we decided to visit the Mathinna Falls, a beautiful spot buried in the midst of the pine and eucalypt plantations that have been planted around Evercreech and Mathinna. Fungi were certainly happening here and the Falls were worth the walk along the rough dirt road through the plantations.

Some plants of interest:

- Drymophila cyanocarpa*
- Billardiera longiflora*
- Acacia terminalis*
- Leptecophylla pendulosa*

Fungi:

- Armillaria novaezealandiae*
- Bolete* sp.
- Boletellus emodensis*
- Boletellus obscurecoccineus*

Entoloma aromaticum
Fistulina hepatica
Fomes hemitephrus
Ganoderma australe
Gymnopus aff. *dryophilus*
Inocybe sp.
Laccaria sp.
Lactarius eucalypti
Leucoagaricus sp.
Marasmiellus affixus
Marasmius elegans
Mycena subgalericulata
Mycena 'brown/pink, bleach odour, on soil'
Mycena carmeliana
Mycena marangania
Mycena mulawaestris
Mycena viscidocruenta
Phellodon 'brown'
Polyporus melanopus
Postia lactea
Psilocybe brunneoalbescens
Russula 'pink cap and stipe, cream gills'
Russula compacta
Russula neerimea
Russula persanguinea
Simocybe phlebophora
Stereum ostrea
Stropharia formosa
Tapinella panuoides

Snails:

Dentherona subrugosa
Helicarion cf cuvieri
Caryodes dufresnii



Boletellus obscurecoccineus
 Photo Amanda Thomson



Opilionid Stygynidae (Laniatores).
 Photo Amanda Thomson

Amanda's comment:

This Opilionid the most interesting find for me. The Opilionid is demonstrating how they use their second pair of long legs as antennae. It was found by Sabine in rocks near the Mathinna Falls.

Saturday evening – Bob Mesibov talk

On Saturday night we were treated to a talk by Dr Bob Mesibov, an authority on Myriapods (only 4 experts in Australia!). These include velvet worms, millipedes and centipedes. Bob has a special interest in the order Polydesmida of which there are about 200 species in Tasmania all with 62 legs! He paid special attention to a paper he has recently had published on parapatry among the species, in particular two species in the north west of Tasmania that have a very definite distributional boundary between them and although he has examined many environmental variables he hasn't as yet been able to explain this.

Furthermore, Bob instructed us as to how to determine the sex of a millipede (a skill which is sure to impress onlookers) by examining the gonopods of the male (which are modified legs) with a 10x lens. In addition the gonopods are very species specific so if you know your gonopods you can identify the species in the field.

PS. Yes the Ghost fungus did glow, 2 nights in a row!

Easter Camp – Sunday 20 April

Janet Fenton

On Sunday morning, twelve field nats headed out over the sheep paddocks in the direction of a sandstone ruin. It wasn't long before the party split. Four starters found the paddocks a bit barren in terms of leaf litter invertebrates and turned back to try their luck for multipedes elsewhere.

When we reached the edge of the Eucalyptus amygdalina forest the fauna became a bit more exciting, with the trees alive with musk lorikeets and green rosellas. Around the supposedly haunted ruin of Garth, Anna exclaimed that she hadn't seen saffron thistles in a long while. For the tragic history of Garth, see: <http://www.fingalvalleyhistory.com/Garth.htm>

Scouting through the bush, Geoff located the grave of a two-year old child who died at Garth in 1840. We found a number of wombat burrows in the vicinity, including one close to the little headstone.



Ann Peters' grave (The new plaque was added by descendents of the family in 1988.)

Photo Amanda Thomson

Numerous stick nests, probably ravens', were seen in the trees, and we also came upon a log where both a deer with six-pointed antlers and a wallaby had departed this mortal coil. Butterflies were by now active, sending Abbey and Amanda in pursuit with their cameras.

The paddocks had warmed somewhat by the time we headed back, and were now alive with field crickets and grasshoppers, including the large yellow-winged locust. A dung beetle posed for the cameras too. Fossil brachiopods adorned the Permian mudstone at a culvert.

Birdlife in and around the paddocks included eastern rosellas, skylarks, magpies and ravens, and silvereyes among copses of willow. Sabine and John flushed a flock of quail. Close to the lake at camp we enjoyed a good view of spotted pardalotes among the shrubs and a flock of screeching white cockatoos on the far side of the lake.

Following lunch and cleaning the camp, a group of us drove around the Rossarden Road (where several members saw deer), meeting at the Rossarden and Storys Creek museum. A volunteer had kindly opened the museum as some were particularly keen to learn about the tin and wolfram mining history of the district.

This brought to an end an enjoyable and informative Easter camp in the Fingal Valley.



Pill millipede. Photo Kristi Ellinsen

Kristi's comment:

I found this millipede under a rock. I sat for what I considered to be ages to see if it would uncurl, but no luck :-)

Sugar Gliders, threat to Swift Parrots?

Following recent media reports that Sugar Gliders are responsible for deaths of Swift Parrot adults and nestlings, BirdLife Tasmania is asking members and friends to aid efforts by the Australian National University (ANU) and DPIPWE to obtain genetic material on Sugar Gliders from around Tasmania and the Bass Strait islands. The Sugar Glider is believed to have been introduced to Tasmania early in the 19th century but the evidence is minimal.

A comparison of DNA from Tasmanian and mainland Sugar Gliders will allow a determination as to whether the Sugar Glider was introduced to Tasmania or not.

If you encounter a Sugar Glider, alive or dead, please contact Dr Stephen Harris at DPIPWE to arrange collection.

Email: Stephen.Harris@dipwe.tas.gov.au

Phone: 0427 330 945