



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 20 January, 2015.

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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 4 October	Excursion
18-26 Oct	Australian Naturalists Network get-together 2014 at the Lea http://tasfieldnats.weebly.com/australian-naturalists-network.html
Thurs 6 November	Meeting: Guest Speaker: Paddy Dalton will talk about his visit to Patagonia
Sun 9 November	Excursion: To be announced.
7-9 November	Federation Weekend hosted by Burnie Field Naturalists Club
Thurs 4 December	Meeting: Members night
Sunday 7 December	Excursion: To be announced
December	Christmas BBQ. Date to be announced

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

Subs due now

A reminder that 2015 subs will be due on 1 January. 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

Excursion to the new IMAS building

Amanda Thomson

Field Naturalists visited the new home of the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies on 6th July 2014. The excursion followed the talk by Dr Roger Proctor on 'Oceans of Data- Australia's Integrated Marine Observing System'. The \$45 million IMAS building, located behind Princes Wharf on the Hobart docks, was opened in December 2013.



Photo Amanda Thomson

After signing in, we were led through the Main Foyer which links all 3 floors. The foyer features the ice core drill taken from the Law Dome project 1987-1993. The 1200 m core represents a 10,000 year climate record.



The glass screen. Photo Amanda Thomson

The ground floor is open to the public, and invites public viewing. An Exhibition space fronts onto the Salamanca area bringing science projects to the public. The very impressive lecture theatre has a glass patterned screen

depicting different layers of the ocean floor and seats which swivel 360° - the first in Australia. These are just some of the innovations - part of a very well designed facility. The ground floor also contains flexible rooms for teaching and seminars plus teaching labs.

Level 2 contains offices for IMOS, IMAS staff and PhD students.

The Galley dining / cafeteria is located on Level 3 maximising the splendid view of the working port and marine environment. One of the main aims of the building is the bringing together of the many marine research groups (IMAS, IMOS, TPAC and ACE CRC) to facilitate collaborative research and form the basis of Hobart as the centre of Antarctic and Marine Studies.



Photo Amanda Thomson

Having a 5 star green classification - heating is maintained by circulated sea water. The building provides bike racks to encourage the occupants to ride not drive. A very impressive and attractive building, enthusiastically presented by Dr Proctor.

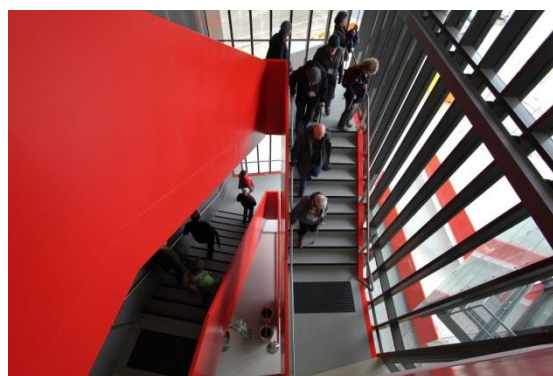


Photo Amanda Thomson

Some acronyms

IMAS – Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies

IMOS – Integrated Marine Observing Systems

ACE CRC – The Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Co-operative Research Centre

TPAC - The Tasmanian Partnership in Advanced Computing

Excursion to Raptor Refuge Park

Amanda Thomson and Deirdre Brown

We were fortunate to be able to visit Craig Webb's Raptor refuge on August 9th. The organisation is incorporated as The Raptor and Wildlife Refuge of Tasmania, and it is "committed to securing the future of Tasmania's raptors by reducing human impacts through rehabilitating injured, sick or orphaned raptors, educating the public and supporting habitat conservation."

(Quote from Raptor Refuge website).

As a working refuge (not a zoo or wildlife park) it is not open to the general public, although group visits may be booked by prior arrangement.



Gathering in the carpark at the Raptor refuge

Photo Amanda Thomson

Craig Webb greeted our enthusiastic group and appeared initially disconcerted by our large turnout of 27 members and friends. We gathered in the purpose built visitor centre, an impressive and unusual octagonal building with an inspiring steel sculpture of an eagle by Keith Smith on the pinnacle turret. This education centre has displays with information about raptors and aids to identification, and also many relics such as talons and wings which invite handling.

There were also some 'live' exhibits, patients who can never be released due to their injuries.

Bella the Australian Hobby sat quietly on a perch, observing the group with her keen eyes, and outside an injured Brown Falcon was similarly perched.



Bella the Australian Hobby

Photo Mick Brown

Craig informed us of his working refuge, how he acquires the birds, the difficulties of rehabilitating and releasing them. He shared his fondness and knowledge of the different species – Wedge-tails, owls, falcons – their individuality and idiosyncrasies. Much discussion involved the causes of their injuries and deaths and ways of preventing them.



Masked owl

Photo Mick Brown



Brown Falcon

Photo Els Wakefield

After Craig's talk and our examination of the displays in the education centre, we were able to view the birds recuperating in the flight aviaries. Sadly many of the birds will never be released owing to the severity of the injuries they have sustained during encounters with power lines, boats or road traffic, or persecution by humans. Birds which collide with wind turbines usually do not survive. The largest flight aviary (21 metres high, and made from salmon netting) was home to several wedge tail eagles, many of whom are forced to live out their days in captivity due to their injuries.



Wedge-tail Eagles in the flight aviary

Photo Erica Shankley

Craig's Centre is an important advocate for raptors and their place in the ecosystem.

It was a great opportunity to view and appreciate these magnificent birds at close quarters as well as gain further recognition and awareness of the hazards they face, our numbers indicative of our interest in their fate.

There are about 120 Wedge-tailed eagle breeding pairs left in the state, less than 110 pairs of grey goshawks, and less than 200 pairs of sea-eagles. They are fighting against the tide of habitat destruction caused by coastal home development, boat accidents, and entanglements in power lines. Goshawks are often shot to protect poultry.

How can you help? Craig says that the best way for people to assist his cause is for them to join as members, and this is easily done through his website:

<http://www.raptorrefuge.com.au>

The website also includes more information about the Raptor refuge and the work done there, and also some magnificent photos and descriptions of all Tasmanian raptors.



Craig Webb

Photo Els Wakefield

Excursion to Tasman Peninsula, 14 June 2014

Sue Smillie

Attendees: Kevin Bonham, Abbey Throssell, Genevieve Gates, David Ratkowsky, Amanda Thompson, Anna McEldowney, John Rosendale, Sabine Borgis, Bob Smillie and Sue Smillie.

The excursion to the Tasman Peninsula was rescheduled to the second Saturday in the month owing to the poor weather forecast for the first weekend in June. This proved to be a wise decision as the conditions at the Peninsula for the duration of track walks were dry and fine.

In addition to the excursion being a normal monthly field trip, organisers of the forthcoming ANN 2014 Meeting reconnoitered the route for the planned the 22nd October Excursion.



The group at Tasman Peninsula

Photo Amanda Thomson

With most of the group having met-up at Sorell, the first stop on the excursion was the scenic view-point

overlooking Pirates Bay. The clear weather conditions provided good views across the Bay and down to Cape Hauy and the Lanterns. The good visibility also allowed the Hippolyte Rocks a few kilometres out to sea from the Cape Hauy to be seen. Notable as being formed from granite, the Hippolyte Rocks are different in composition from those of Capes Hauy, Pillar and Raoul which are dolerite.

Leaving the scenic view-point the group next briefly stopped at the Tessellated Pavement, but owing to the tide being high, moved onto the Tasmans Arch then assembled in the car park at the Devils Kitchen.

Taking our picnic lunches, the group walked the Track from Devils Kitchen to Waterfall Bay looking for “things of interest”. While expecting to see a range of understorey plant species lining the track, it quickly became apparent that the bush on the western-side of the walking track had been subject to a recent regeneration burn. Still smelling charred from having been burnt in March 2014, 1-2 cm-high seedlings with their first pair of leaves were sprouting from the blackened soil and Anna was the first to spot bud break of epicormic buds on tree trunks.



Black cockatoo
Photo Amanda Thomson



Coastal view Tasman Peninsula
Photo Amanda Thomson

Sabine noted the presence of minute cup-like fungi looking like brown- and black-soil crumbs crusting the blackened soil, and Genevieve quickly identified these as being a little Ascomycetes cup fungi.

Whilst plant life on the western-side of the track was charred and only three birds were seen in this area, Scarlet Robin, Grey Fantail and Bronzewing, Genevieve was very active finding and photographing numerous fungi. Occupied with looking for, and at fungi, it took an hour or so to reach Waterfall Bay where, after admiring the view, lunch was taken.

It is relevant to comment that on Tasman Peninsula the rocks of Waterfall Bay, Tasmans Arch and Devils Kitchen are sedimentary whereas those south of Waterfall Bay are igneous dolerite. More easily eroded than igneous rocks, erosion by the sea, salt and wind forces at the base of the sea cliffs has led to the weaker joints in the rock being preferentially worn away and caused the formation of caves and tunnels.

Similarly at the northern end of Pirates Bay, on the Forester Peninsula, the rock is sedimentary and on this Peninsula wave action has caused the formation of extensive rock platforms, while salt action has produced a jointed pattern on the platform, and the formation of features called ‘Pans’ and ‘Loaves’. Known as the Tessellated Pavement, it is rated as being of ‘international geological significance’.

After lunch at the Waterfall Bay, the group walked back to Devils Kitchen and there looked at the former sea-tunnel which now has a collapsed roof.

Leaving the Devils Kitchen the group drove to Tasman Arch and walked the tracks in the vicinity. Formerly a sea cave, it became an Arch when the back wall of the cave collapsed.



'Loaves and Pans' at Tesselated Pavement

Photo Amanda Thomson

A short-drive to the Tasman Blowhole followed and a walk made through the coastal heath to the sea cliffs and a look-out which gave views northwards over the Forestier Peninsula. This short walking-track provided some birding highlights, in the heath, three Yellow-tailed black cockatoos flew overhead and landed immediately in front of Amanda, and at the look-out a White-bellied sea eagle was seen soaring over the bay. Obliginglly, the sea-eagle then alighted in a dead tree on a nearby cliff. Amanda spotted two seals swimming below the look-out.

Moving on from the Blowhole, the group returned to the Tesselated Pavement State Reserve at Lufra Cove and now being low tide walked out onto the Pavement to admire the jointing formation known as "pans" and "loaves". Although the tide was suitable for looking at rock pools on the northern end of the beach there were few, if any takers for the activity. At the site, arrangements concerning the forthcoming ANN field excursion to the Pavement were discussed.

Snails - Waterfall Bay:

Caryodes dufresnii

Tasmaphena sinclairi

Thryasona diemenensis

Helicarion cf cuvieri

Paralaoma discors,

Prolesophanta nelsonensis

Punctidae sp "Micro Cripps"

Last three are new records for this locality.

Fungi list for Tasman Arch to Waterfall Bay

Amanita xanthocephala

Anthracobia muelleri

Boletus 'wedgensis'

Bovista sp.

Cortinarius 'violet'

Cortinarius 'yellowish brown'

Cortinarius archeri

Cortinarius sinapicolor

Crepidotus variabilis

Descolea recedens

Earthball E 247

Fistulina hepatica

Fistulinella mollis

Hydnum repandum

Hypholoma fasciculare var. fasciculare

Inocybe sp.

Laccaria sp.

Lichenomphalia chromacea

Mycena subgalericulata

Panellus stipticus

Phylloporus rhodoxanthus

Polyporus gayanus

Ramaria anziana

Rhodocollybia butyracea

Russula sp.

Trametes versicolor

Lambert Gully excursion 6 September 2014

Amanda Thomson

On a most beautiful day, around 12 of us climbed up the Lambert Reserve track from Churchill Avenue to the Mount Nelson Signal Station. We were on the lookout for giant springtails, but to my knowledge didn't find any. Some took an alternative loop track back.

Right: The group at Lambert Gully

Photo Erika Shankley



Many interesting finds were made. These included harvestman, case moths and caterpillars, some spiders, wasps, hover fly, sawfly larvae and an oscillated skink.

Our arrival at the top revealed a spectacularly beautiful view for lunch. Having never walked this particular track before – it too was a great find!

Snail list for Lambert Park (September):

These ten native species were recorded:

Caryodes dufresnii

Tasmaphena ruga

Prolesophanta nelsonensis

Paralaoma discors

P. cf hobarti

P. sp "Knocklofty"

Punctidae sp "Micro Cripps"

Planilaoma sitiens

Trocholaoma parvissima

Laomavix collisi

All were among the 13 spp already known from Lambert Park. Exotic *Oxychilus* spp (which appear to prey on some native snail species) were very common.



Observations

Harvestman

Orange wasp - Banded Caterpillar parasite; Ichneumon – but predominantly orange coloured.

Hover fly - Syrphidae, Genus *Melangyna*

Spiders – jumping spider ? *Jotus* spp, and *Araneus* sp

Sawfly larvae – *Perga* spp, and leaf skeletoniser – *Uraba lugens*

Fly larvae, found in fresh scats possibly *Beridinae*, Soldier fly.

Case moths found in *Allocasuarina* bushes

Caterpillar also found in *Allocasuarina*

Allocasuarina seed pods – with sprouts.

Left: *Ichneumon* wasp

Photo Amanda Thomson

Obituary

Ken N G Simpson

29 August 1938 – 9 July 2014

Well-known and honoured birdwatcher Ken Simpson has died at the age of 76. His passion for birds began early in life and he joined the Bird Observers Club (BOCA) at the age of 11; a few years later he also joined the Royal Ornithological Union. Through his subsequent studies and writing he was more closely associated with BOCA and was the president of that club from 1996 to 1999.

He was also the editor of *The Australian Bird Watcher* for five years from 1977–1981, and later assisted the editors, as a sub-editor for papers on rare birds. Ken was made an Honorary Life Member of BOCA in recognition of his lifelong contributions.

Ken's work on birdlife was published over many years and is both widely known and highly regarded. Simpson and Day's *Birds of Australia* was first published in 1984; the fifth edition of the volume—now entitled *Guide to the Birds of Australia*—was published in 1996. He also published *Birds in Bass Strait* (1972) and was the co-author (with Zoe Wilson) of *Birdwatching in Australia and New Zealand*, in 1998. In a monumental effort Ken compiled *The Bird-Book CD-Rom: a Bibliography of Bird Books*, which was published in 1995. In the 1st edition, it contained more than 4000 entries.

A later edition of the work was issued as Report no. 5 in the BOCA series. Much of Ken's writing in published articles and papers reflected his range of scientific

interests, but also encouraged the wider community to be aware of, and take an interest in the world of birds.

Although most remembered for his work on birds, Ken's interests in natural history were in fact much wider. He joined FNCV in 1994 and was immediately active in the club, serving on its council from 1994 to 1996. He was awarded the Australian Natural History Medallion in 1996, for his contribution to natural history

(ornithology). Appropriately, he had been nominated by the Bird Observers Club of Australia.

This obituary was contributed by Gary Presland
Hon Fellow, Melbourne School of Land & Environment
University of Melbourne

Sightings

Lewins Rail

On 27th July, my friend Karen Tie from Oyster Cove and I were walking at Oyster Cove. At a creek crossing Karen spotted a bird foraging along the edge of the water. I took some pictures but the light was failing and it was not until I reached home to download the shots that I realised it was a Lewin's Rail. This was a 'lifer' for me, that is, my first Lewin's Rail.

In a later visit to the site with friends we saw two birds scurrying along the shore. Lewin's Rails are usually very secretive and rarely seen. They can be heard on most of the islands around Tasmania and Mike Driessen photographed one at Peter Murrell Conservation area. In 2012 I confirmed a breeding record on Goose Is in Bass Strait, a tiny, fluffy black ball with long legs similar to those yellow Easter chicks but black and unfortunately, dead.

Both males and females are similar although the female is duller and the crown is more streaked. The breast is plain olive-grey and parts of the wing, underparts and under tail are black, finely streaked whitish. The adult bill is long, pinkish with a dark tip. Juveniles lack the fiery chestnut nape and shoulders of the adults. The immature bill is blackish and the upper parts are more heavily streaked black, with little if any chestnut on nape and more spotted below.

It is possible that there is a small group at Oyster Cove as it is good habitat. *'The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia'* by Pizzey and Knight describes the birds as "Patchy in suitable east Australian coastal habitat, from Queensland to South Australia, they are mostly found in south east Australia and Tasmania, vagrant in Northern Territory and presumed extinct in south West Australia. They are uncommon, seasonally dispersive or nomadic. They also occur in the Philippines, PNG and the sub-Antarctic islands of NZ."

This is a very important and rare sighting as it is suspected that numbers are declining on the Tasmania mainland.

Reference:

The Field Guide to the Birds of Australia by Graham Pizzey and Frank Knight



Lewins Rail
Photo Els Wakefield

Masked owl in Macquarie Street

News came of a Masked Owl perched in a Western Australian flowering gum in Macquarie Street outside TMAG. Several members including Mick Brown made special trips to the city to photograph the owl. In Nick Mooney's estimation, the owl was a young male, and while probably not ill, it may have not eaten recently and been quite hungry.



Masked owl
Photo: Mick Brown