

# Bulletin

## of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

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January 1997 Number 285

Acting Editor Sue Collier

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc. encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist* annually in October. People with a range of backgrounds and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) for further information, or write to GPO Box 68A Hobart 7001.

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### Program

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General meetings start at 7:45pm 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 at 10am outside the main entrance to the Museum, Macquarie Street. If you're planning to attend an outing but not the meeting prior, check as to the timing of the excursion, as sometimes unforeseen changes occur.*

- 6 Feb                    Allan Gray will speak on Plant Taxonomy with a special emphasis on eucalypt species.
- 9 Feb (Sunday)        *Allan will lead us on an outing in the Hobart area to try out our identification skills on the eucalypts.*
- 6 March                AGM & Presidents address. Patti Virtue's talk will focus on Southern Ocean studies and is bound to include some krill stories.
- 7-9 March             *Federation meeting hosted by Tasmanian Fauna Society and Tasmanian Herpetological Society to be held at "Carnaroo" Scout Camp at Paper Beach on the West Tamar. This should be an excellent weekend with an exciting program including Holwell Gorge, Black Sugarloaf, Supply River and Tamar Island.*
- Accommodation is available for \$5 per person per night plus \$11 for Saturday evening meal. Camping also available. Booking essential if you want a bed and/or meal on Saturday. Contact Sue Collier on 6229 6597 for further information and bookings (by 3 March).*
- 16 Mar (Sunday)     *(Note change of date due to Federation meeting) Outing to Eaglehawk Neck to look at the seashore and rock pools.*
- 3 April                 Jeff Copson will talk about feral cats.
- 5 April (Saturday)   *Bird watching and fungi trip on the lower slopes of Mt Wellington. Bring binoculars and hand lens.*
- 1 May                  Peter McQuillan (author of *Butterflies of Tasmania*) will give us a talk covering some of his recent research work in the area of the dispersal of native plants by native animals.
- 4 May (Sunday)      *Peter will lead us on an outing in the Hobart area and show us some examples of plant dispersal.*

### Reminder

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1997 membership fees are now due. A form is enclosed for payment of your subs. Prompt payment will help our committee.

### 1997 Committee

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A nomination form is also enclosed. Elections will take place at the AGM on 6 March.

### Au Revoir Don

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Don Hird has left Tasmania for the Trobriand Islands (off Papua New Guinea) for two years as a "volunteer abroad". We thank Don for his hard work as president, committee member and mammal survey group leader over many years. We wish Don, Jacinta, Halley and Louis all the best in their new adventure and congratulate Don for his newly acquired Masters Degree.

## Excursion Reports

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### Hartz Mountain 8 December 1996

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by Sue Collier

Eight Field Nats set off from Hartz car park on a sunny and clear day with a cold wind. On our drive down from Hobart, Phil and I saw a grey goshawk near Franklin, sitting quietly in a tree. We took the main walking track to Hartz Peak stopping often to admire the plants. We were surprised to see that the old bush hut across Arve Creek has now been demolished. Some 12 years ago, a wildfire started at this hut and burnt out some of the lower slopes.

Phil pointed out a myrtle tree (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) which appeared to have been burnt in an earlier bushfire. It has produced several shoots from a lignotuber which have now grown into healthy trunks. This type of regeneration is not often seen in rainforests but is more common in sub-alpine areas.

We continued on and eventually reached the summit for lunch. Several members of the party had never been to the summit before. We had excellent views of Mt Anne, Federation Peak and many other South-West mountains. The alpine wildflowers were quite good, with mostly early varieties being seen. These included *Euphrasia gibbsiae*, *Erigeron stellaris*, *Mitrasacme archeri*, *Aciphylla procumbens*, and *Senecio pectinatus* var *ochroleuca* (in bud).

Birds seen on the mountain included green rosellas on the lower slopes and many crescent honeyeaters higher up. These were very vocal-perhaps they recognised the start of summer.

Snails found by Kevin were *Planilaoma luckmanii*, *Caryodes dufresnii*, and *Stenacapha* sp. "Wellington".

### Lune River Weekend 9–10 November 1996

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by Kevin Bonham

About twenty resilient members braved the delightfully unstable weather conditions and headed south in search of orchids, on a weekend which actually yielded 26 species. Our first walk, around Ida Bay, produced only eight but these included one find of interest. We couldn't identify the strange little *Prasophyllum* in the field but Les Rubenach worked out it was *P. pulchellum*, a newly described species known from southern Bruny Island!

After the walk many opted for the comforts of the Thermal Pool, or went underground completely at Hastings Caves. Sloshing about on the surface, I was amazed to find a new species of snail (*Geminoropa*) right outside such a popular tourist site! Another (already known) undescribed *Geminoropa* also showed up.

[At dusk a small party were seen heading again in the direction of the Thermal Pool. No further reliable information is available. (ed)]

The next morning blessed us with magnificently low and heavy snowfalls on nearby Adamsons Peak, but ten of us did the South Cape Bay walk anyway. A vicious hailstorm notwithstanding, we were richly rewarded with 14 species of orchid. The best find was *Caladenia transitoria* (formerly known as *C. iridescens*), with others including *Prasophyllum lindleyanum* and a large *Caladenia patersonii* in exactly the same spot as last year.

#### New members

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A special welcome to Mark Jacobs, Albert Thompson, Leonard Cusack, Jonathan Duddles and Jane Tyler.

### Untouched King Island

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by Kevin Bonham

Those who know the place will know I'm joking, but this is actually the title of a sometimes lurid guidebook which was the butt of many jokes between myself, Don and the Forster/Wilkins family on our unofficial club trip to King Island in December.

Seriously, King Island has much to offer the visiting naturalist and is grossly under-rated. Two objectives of our trip, the green-and-golden-bell-frog and the potoroo, managed to elude us despite numerous five-year-old reports. Snails were more forthcoming, with 13 species found, including seven new records for the island, three new records for the state (all Victorian species), and the rediscovery of *Austrochloritis victoriae*, common in Victoria but missing from Tasmania since about 1920.

A millipede I found turned out to be a new species, and a fair tally of orchids (15 species) included the strangest *Thelymitra* I have ever seen. Don had a lot of fun catching burrowing shore crabs around the fascinating coastal springs.

Serious surveying of the Bass Strait islands is far too rare, and I'd like to thank the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery for their generous financial support of this survey.

#### Did you know?

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Easter 1906 saw the second Easter Camp-Out of the T.F.N.C. at Freycinet Peninsula. Thirty-eight members enjoyed several days of bird watching, botanising and other natural history pursuits. Among the participants were J. W. Beattie (photographer), and L. Rodway (Government botanist).

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- 5 June Tony Koslow, CSIRO. Sea mounts of Tasmania, their ecology, fisheries potential and conservation
- 7 Jun (Sat) Walk to be decided at Jun 5th meeting.
- 3 Jul Jeff Copson. Feral Cats
- 6 Jul (Sun) Millipede & centipede collecting trip to Forestier Peninsula. Further details at Jul 3rd meeting.
- 7 Aug Leon Barmuta, University of Tasmania. Aquatic invertebrates.
- 9 Aug (Sat) Walk to be decided at Aug 9th meeting.
- 4 Sep (not confirmed) George Creswell, CSIRO. Ocean currents around Tasmania and the life cycle of marine creatures. This talk might be held at the CSIRO Marine Laboratories, see September bulletin issue for further news.

**Tasmanian Marine Naturalist Association Inc. Program**

7 PM in the Brownlow Room, Hampden Community Centre 84 Hampden Rd, Battery Point

- May 14th Christine Crawford DPIF  
Outline of her program on developing methods for environmental monitoring of fish farms
- June 11th Martin Riddel Antarctic Division  
Discussion of the human impact on the fragile Antarctic environment
- July 9th Louise Goggin. CRIMP  
What is the status of the introduced Pacific Seastar in the River Derwent and what is being done to prevent further introductions into our waters?
- August 13th Harry Burton Antarctic Division  
All about seals

**Letters**

*From the Society for Growing Australian Plants Tasmanian Region Inc., Hobart District Group.*

The Wildflower Committee has asked me to write to your club and thank you for the wonderful display you organised for our recent flower show. All agreed that it certainly fulfilled our pre-show request to be stimulating, visually exciting and informative. It was a first class display.

The date for our next show, 11th to 16th November 1988, has been pencilled in. We hope you may be interested in joining us or that one too. I will write closer to the date with more details.

Jean Taylor  
Secretary 1996 Wildflower Spectacular

*From Don Hird c/o Trobriand Islands.*

Dear Tas Nats all,  
Greetings from the humid tropics. All the heat and humidity can be trying, but they've been amongst the smallest of our concerns so far.

When we arrived here we were presented with several surprises. Our volunteer predecessor had his local family living in the small house provided. Moreover we were all to share the house not for 2-4 weeks, but 'till April. That the four of us would have to live on a single volunteers modest allowance; that there are insect screens on the house, just several missing or inoperative; that there is a lot of petty crime here; etc. etc.

This pressure cooker couldn't last. They left to have a new baby in a PNG mainland hospital two weeks back, though the baby arrived on the two day boat journey. Although it doesn't necessarily take two to be troppo, I didn't take too kindly to all this. Mostly this involves learning the project details for myself, very little documented, horticulturally or otherwise.

Other aspects of life here are not easy either. Of our five weeks so far we have had one with the daily electricity ration of four hours 1800-2200. Food familiar to Australians kids is in limited range, supply and is expensive. Hally has just discovered sweet potato though and we hope to wean them on to other local Kai Kai. Kids love to swim in a pool 20m from here.

One the brighter side, fruit is usually good especially bananas and coconuts, also pineapples, paw-paws, and mangoes just finished. Local subsistence vegetables like yams, taro etc. are OK but fairly subtle. Lots of fish, large edible crabs and some crayfish on the local menu.

In Moresby I purchased "Birds of New Guinea". It's a bit frustrating on these islands on the fringe that have only a fraction of the mainland quotient. Nonetheless, one day while pumping the water to the house I saw a flock of frigate birds. The most prominent bird around the house area is the hooded butcher bird which calls from the coconut palms at dawn and dusk. Metallic starlings have a colony of suspend nests in several school grounds; they also undertake massed flights late afternoon, just like Hobart. Eclectus parrots and black-capped lorics can be seen occasionally, especially in the remnants of rainforest. One of the species of any sort that is common to both here and Tas is the white-bellied sea eagle, of which I've seen one of so far.

Jacinta and Luis have been back in Tas this last week as Jac's father is gravely ill. More to follow, curfew beckons.

Best Regards  
Don Hird

**1997 Committee**

Our new committee for 1997 was formed at the AGM in March. They are as follows:

President -Kevin Bonham

Vice President -Patti Virtue

Secretary -Julia Scott

Treasurer -John Reid

Tasmanian Naturalist Editor -Rob Taylor

Bulletin Editor -Andrew Walsh

Walks & Talks -Amanda Thomson

General Committee -Genevieve Gates

General Committee -Starola Jacka

General Committee -Jim Paterson

General Committee -Kylie McKendrick

**The Understorey Network story**

At Aprils Field Nats meeting, Els Hayward gave us an interesting lecture all about The Understorey Network. The following is a summary of her address and explains the great work her people do.

The idea of an Understorey Network formed two and a half years ago when Alan Gray (Greening Australia) and Biz Nicholson (national Landcare award winner and landowner) felt that there was a need for more focus on understorey plants as opposed to the heavy use of trees in revegetation projects.

The understorey, which includes shrubs, small trees, grasses, orchids, lichens, mosses, and fungi, prevent erosion, improve soil fertility and water quality, and in primary production, can provide habitat for natural predators that assist in the control of pest species. Els and Biz visited a group called Trees for Life in Adelaide. This 1000 member organisation aims to encourage natural revegetation by using city based volunteers to grow plants for farmers. They provided advice on seed collecting, databasing, attracting membership and funding, etc.

Upon return, a series of meetings and formation of a steering committee saw a Landcare Grant provided 18 months ago to set up the network and employ a coordinator, Anna Povey, who is based in Launceston. Today the membership is up to 200 and still growing. After paying a \$15 joining fee, members are entitled to receive free propagation materials and assistance to grow 250 plants. They are issued with seed and on a particular day in December, are asked to sew their seeds, directly into pots to avoid pricking out later.

When the seedlings are ready for planting out, they are sent to property owners or Landcare groups or planted by the volunteers on their own land (although urban based growers usually grow for rural landowners). Members can also participate in the collection of seed, assist in office duties, propagation research, plant identification, databasing, or education and promotional activities.

Membership forms can be obtained at Field Nats meetings each month, or contact The Coordinator, The Understorey Network, 19 Gorge Rd, Trevallyn, 7250.

## Megapodes: Serious adventures for science and conservation

Dr. Darryl Jones from the Megapode Specialist Group, Griffith University Queensland, is organising the Third International Megapode Symposium later this year (6-8 Dec 1997) at the Little Desert Lodge, Nhill Victoria.



The Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), common around Little Desert Lodge, Nhill Victoria, location for the 3rd International Megapode Symposium later this year. (Picture from Simpson & Day's CD Birds of Australia)

The third IMS brings together the worlds foremost authorities to discuss the latest findings, ideas and issues in Megapode conservation, taxonomy and relationships, interactions with humans, ecophysiology, evolution, and natural history on this unique family of birds.

This year they will emphasise the personal experiences and adventures of those involved in studying these birds in some of the exciting and remote regions of the world. Speakers from the USA, Europe, Indonesia, Oceania and Australia will be attending, with plenty of stories and slides.

Registration is \$50, or \$25 for students and concessions. Accommodation including meals and entertainment is \$130 per day.

For information and application form contact  
Dr Darryl Jones  
Faculty of Environmental Sciences  
Griffith University Nathan Qld 4111  
Ph: 07 3875 7451  
Fax: 07 3875 7459  
e-mail D.Jones@ens.gu.edu.au

The Megapode Specialist Group is affiliated with Word Pheasant Association and Birdlife International, and a member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission

## Book Review Flight of the Shearwater by Vincent Serventy Kangaroo Press Sydney, 1996 R.R.P. \$19.95

This book is based on the research undertaken by Dr. Dominic Serventy (the author's elder brother) from 1949 until his death in 1988. From this time on the author continued to make observations and record them. These two gentlemen have been recognised universally as specialised ornithologists with particular knowledge of the Short-tailed Shearwater, or Tasmanian Muttonbird as it is commonly known, and this book is recommended as a simple record of a long-living and well-known species which has special interest to Tasmanians.

I was fortunately able to spend two separate periods of a fortnight each with both Serventys on Fisher Island during their investigation.  
L. E. Wall

## Timelines Australia Project

The Timelines Australia Project is compiling a nationwide database of natural events eg. plant blossoming, animal breeding and weather patterns, to become the basis for re-establishing the local calendars which Aboriginal people developed over thousands of years.

For bureaucratic reasons, Australia decided to begin each three month season at the start of each corresponding month. The European calendar of four equal seasons is inappropriate for northern Australia and only roughly matches the seasons of southern Australia. A basic pattern of six seasons based on wet and dry is widely recognised for northern Australia, while most Aboriginal calendars have between five to seven seasons. While many tribal calendars in northern Australia are still in use, many southern calendars have been lost.

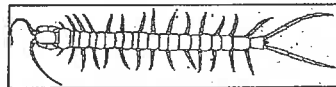
You can contribute to this project in Tasmania by recording your local plant and animal behaviour along with the date and location and sending it to the Tasmanian Environment Centre. 102 Bathurst St. Hobart, 7000.

## Tamar Island Wetlands Sun 8 March 1997 by Sue Collier

A small group of Tas Field Nats visited the Tamar Island wetlands on our way home from the Federation meeting at Paper Beach.

Tamar Island is an area of approximately 60ha, situated in the upper reaches of the Tamar estuary accessed from near Legana on the West Tamar Highway. There is a walk of about 4km return mostly on boardwalks with good views of the wildlife sanctuary. The facilities are excellent including BBQ (gas, though you would have to carry and eski etc.) and toilets. Currently there is one bird hide but we were told that there are plans to extend the boardwalk and construct several more hides. The wetlands are managed by the Parks & Wildlife Service and are open Wed & Sun 12pm-6pm with extended hours during summer. A \$2 entry fee is charged. In our opinion it was well worth visiting and recommended if you are passing along the West Tamar Highway. It's best to allow at least a couple of hours and take your binoculars. More information is available by phoning PWS on 019 971 213 or 03 6336 2678. The birds we saw included the White-bellied Sea Eagle, Australasian Shoveller, Chestnut Teal, Pacific Black Duck, Wood Duck, Great Egret, Black-fronted Dotterel, White-fronted Chat, Purple Swamphen, and Crested Tern.

## Centipedes and Millipedes are beautiful but...



much to little appreciated. To rectify this problem, Bob Mesibov from The Queen Victoria Museum wants specimens sent to him for identifying and databasing. They will be deposited at the museum if not required elsewhere. It's vital for databasing that he also receives a grid referenced (or potentially grid-referenceable) locality, a collection date and collector name(s). I recently contacted Bob Mesibov and asked him how he would like the specimens collected.

"I prefer grid references specifying each locality as a 100m square, but something like '100m NW of Pelverata Falls' is OK because I can get the grid reference off

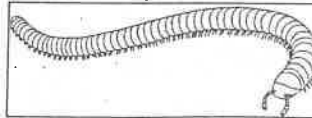
the appropriate map. A pencil or India ink label with this information should accompany all specimens from one locality and should go into the jar or vial containing them (not taped or glued to the outside). A miscellaneous lot of specimens from more than one locality on more than one date (eg. 'Maria Island, May 1996') is just about useless for myriapod record-keeping. Tasmania is now well-covered by 1:25 000 and 1:100 000 maps, and field naturalists can have very few excuses these days for sloppy biological recording."

"Put centipedes and millipedes into 80% alcohol in the field. They can also be collected live and pickled later. Lab-grade ethyl alcohol and tap water is usually used, but methylated spirits and isopropyl alcohol are fine for short-term storage. Leave the freshly pickled specimens to 'harden' for a few days before transferring to fresh 80% alcohol."

"Spirostreptidan millipedes (see illustration below) are black, pencil-shaped creatures which give off pungent-smelling yellow secretions when disturbed. These secretions can stain other millipedes and for this reason spirostreptidans should be separately stored. To avoid mechanical damage to smaller myriapods, pill millipedes (the black, roll-up forms) should also be stored and shipped separately."

"Ship the specimens in small, tightly closed containers well-sealed in plastic bags and cushioned by packing. Fill the containers completely with alcohol and/or cotton wool to prevent damage to specimens by sloshing of liquid during shipment."

Send them to Bob Mesibov, Research Associate, QVMAG Wellington St. Launceston 7250.  
Drawings courtesy of Bob Mesibov.



Note: On Jul 6th (Sun) the club is conducting a millipede & centipede collecting trip to Forestier Peninsula. Further details at Jul 3rd meeting.

## Animals & Plants Threatened by Declining Water Quality

Peter McGlone, the Tasmanian Coordinator of the Threatened Species Network (TSN), has sent us some information regarding a submission the TSN and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) presented to the Sustainable Development Advisory Council on the draft State Policy on Water Quality Management in February.

Further details can be obtained by contacting the TSN, but below are a few of their concerns. A total of 127 species listed on the State Threatened Species Protection Act are threatened in part or entirely by changes in water quality. There are an additional 73 riparian or aquatic species, not on the State Act, that are rare and potentially threatened by habitat change. Also, 21 of 26 riparian vegetation communities identified for the Midlands and eastern Tasmania are unreserved (ie. 8) or poorly reserved (ie. 13).

In the Midlands and eastern Tasmania, prime threats to riparian vegetation are land clearance, grazing, forestry operations, fire, introduced species, removal of stream debris, and, in some instances, rehabilitation activities. Inundation and changes to water flows for hydro-power production are clearly a threat in other regions of the state.

The State Threatened Species Protection Act, if given sufficient funding, will provide an adequate mechanism for rescuing species from the effects of past mismanagement, particularly where landholders and industries are cooperative. The difficult part, where the legislation is not strong enough, will be in changing the practices of industries such as forestry, farming, hydro and mining. For further information, contact the Threatened Species Network C/ Tasmanian Conservation Trust, 102 Bathurst St. Hobart 7000 Ph. 03622 43552 Fax. 03623 12491 e-mail tsntas@ozemail.com.au

## New Bulletin editor

Mail your bulletin contributions to Andrew Walsh at 146 Misty Hill Rd Mountain River, 7109  
e-mail  
Andrew.Walsh@forestry.tas.gov.au

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- 7<sup>th</sup> Aug Leon Barmuta, University of Tasmania. Aquatic Invertebrates.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Aug (Sun) Mountain River. Meet at the museum normal time or at the Grove Supermarket between 10:30-10:45. Bring hand lenses and gumboots. We will be stopping at three locations along Mountain River and taking samples to have a closer look at the aquatic invertebrates.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sep George Creswell, CSIRO. Ocean currents around Tasmania and the life cycle of marine creatures. **Talk to be held at the CSIRO Marine Laboratories, Battery Point.**
- 7<sup>th</sup> Sep (Sun) To mark Threatened Species Day we will be joining a walk and talk presented by Kris Shaffer. Discover how to encourage bandicoots, plant a wildlife corridor and identify rare plants. The day has been organised by Parks & Wildlife and will be held at **94 Morphetts Rd, Neika, (4 km past the Ferntree Tavern, turn right) at 10am.**
- 26<sup>th</sup> Sep Happy 93rd Birthday Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club! (see article in this issue).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct Mike Bidwell, Glenorchy City Council. Management of the Goat Hills Reserve.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Oct (Sat) Walk around C. N. Pierce Reserve, Goat Hills (behind Glenorchy).
- 6<sup>th</sup> Nov Craig Proctor. Crabs
- 8<sup>th</sup> Nov (Sat) Orchid, bird and crab walk at Orford.

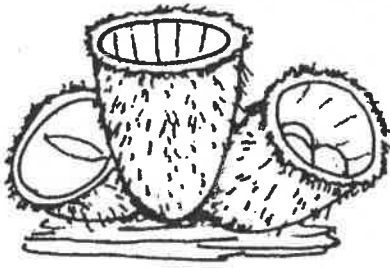
**Editors Note**

Note that the talk on Thursday 7th Aug at 7:45pm is at the CSIRO Marine Laboratories, Battery Point. Also, for the field trip on the 7th of Sep we meet at Neika at 10.00am. I apologise for the absence of the Marine Naturalist Program this issue, unfortunately they had not finalised their schedule before the publication of our bulletin. However, they do have a talk by Prof. Craig Johnson on the new Tasmanian Marine Research Institute and the role of community groups in marine research, at 7pm 10<sup>th</sup> Sep in the Brownlow Room Hampden Community Centre 84 Hampden Rd, Battery Point. Another activity many may be interested in attending will be held by the Understorey Network on Sun 14th Sep at Waverley Flora Park, Bellerive. This wildflower walk will be taken by Mark Fountain, and it starts at the Winifred Curtis Memorial Gates at 10:30 am (in Mercedes Place off Lanena St.).

Mail your bulletin contributions to Andrew Walsh at 146 Misty Hill Rd Mountain River, 7109, or e-mail Andrew.Walsh@forestry.tas.gov.au

# The Birds Nest Fungus

By David Ratkowsky



A curious fungus, known as a Bird's Nest Fungus, was collected by Els Hayward in her backyard, and delivered to David Ratkowsky by Genevieve Gates. David has never collected a bird's nest fungus himself, and has only seen one on a previous occasion, when one was brought to the Mycology Lab. by its collector. David asked Alan Mills, mycologist in the Plant Science Department of the University of Tasmania, if he could identify the fungus. Alan told David about a book entitled "The Bird's Nest Fungi" by Harold J. Brodie, a Canadian expert in the Nidulariaceae, the family embracing these curious fungi. David borrowed the book from one of the University libraries, and, using the information therein, gave a short talk at the June TFNC meeting about these fungi.

The fruiting bodies of these fungi are vase-shaped or bell-shaped, with the 0.5-2 cm high cups filled with small lentil-shaped bodies resembling seeds. The whole of the fruiting body looks like a miniature bird's nest containing "eggs", hence the common name. The family name is derived from *nidula*, which means a small nest. All species are saprophytic and are usually found in moist or shaded locations, and grow upon decaying wood, old fibrous material such as sacking, on the excrement of domestic farm animals, or in humus-rich soil. The fruit bodies are tough and

leathery and are resistant to decay, persisting for a long time. Els' collection was obtained from specimens growing on old fibreboard under a dripping water tap.

There are several different structures to these fungi, with the eggs, or "peridioles", which contain the spore mass, being attached to the fruiting bodies in some species, but free from the walls in other species. Their mechanism of dispersal is a strange one, with the vase-shaped or funnel-shaped sporocarps serving as a kind of "splash-cup", from which water droplets (from rain or dripping water) land in the open mouths of the cup and discharge the peridioles by the force of their impact. Laboratory tests conducted by Brodie in the 1950's showed that large raindrops, which may have a terminal velocity of 4-8 metres per second, can forcibly eject the peridioles a horizontal distance of over 80 centimetres. Other known means of dispersal involve transport by herbivorous animals, rafting on wood and inadvertent dispersal by human agricultural practices.

Are Bird's Nest Fungi rare plants, or are they just overlooked? Perhaps the following anecdote, related by Harold Brodie, might answer that question. Brodie had attended a botanical congress in Stockholm and spent several days visiting Dr. Vandendries, a renowned Belgian mycologist, at his villa "La Chanterelle". They had not seen each other for 18 years, and B. asked V. if the latter had found any Bird's Nest Fungi during the previous 18 years. V's reply was "No", except for one species that he found in the Forest of Fontainebleau, near Paris. B. then suggested to V. that they might go and have a look in the latter's garden.

"Gladly", replied V., "but it would be miraculous to find your beautiful Bird's Nests full of eggs in my garden". They walked down the steps to the stone terrace, where B. pushed aside a solitary rose-bush that had survived a severe frost from two years before. He pulled away some dead leaves and there were little brown cups of *Cyathus striatus*, many of which still contained peridioles. V. uttered a cry of astonishment, and with trembling hands, probed elsewhere. The ground proved to be a veritable culture of beautiful peridiole-filled vases. Some peridioles were found about 50 cm from the nearest cup fungus, to where it had been ejected. Searching under some shrubs along a hedge, B. found seven white buttons, the future vases of yet another species (*Cyathus olla*). To his friend, V. remarked "I had eyes but did not see". Have you looked under a hedge in your garden recently?!

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## Tasmania and the Trobriand Islands Part 1

by our overseas correspondent Don Hird.

The Trobriand Islands lie in the Solomon Sea about 150km north of the eastern tip of mainland PNG. They are one of several groups of islands sited on a large shallow shelf. Like Tasmania, they were connected to mainland Australia during the last ice-age. Geologically the Trobriands are uplifted coralline limestone although altitude rarely exceeds 100 metres. Biogeographically they are part of the Australo-Papuan region.

Differences at the family-level and above are the main topic of this article. A few similarities also occur between Tasmania and

the Trobriands, prompting a whim of nostalgia.

Palms are the most obvious difference in the local landscape. Coconuts dominate the skyline around human settlements, with the much esteemed betelnuts close behind. Sago is uncommon here, but several other palms are prominent in remnant rainforests. Palms reach Victoria, but not Tasmania.

Botanically the differences appear to vastly outweigh the similarities. Some leguminous trees are locally recognizable, for example large ancient-looking pinnate *Acacias*. Other legume trees include some smaller tropical species like Riga (*Lucaena* spp.), and valuable timber trees like Kwila (*Intsia* spp.) and Rosewood (*Pterocarpus* spp.). A fern like *Blechnum* is common here but tree ferns are apparently absent. A *Casuarina* is present on an offshore island here; Tuma Island is reputed to be the local Isle of the Dead- perhaps it is the sound of wind whispering through the needles.

Structurally the local vegetation has a lush and rampant tropical look. Epiphytes often festoon trees and climbers of every size are common. Buttressing is common, particularly where trees grow in coastal sands. Other trees tower from roots apparently in bare rock. Deeper soil areas are given over to intensive gardens. Yams, taro and sweet potato are the main crops, together with bananas. A 3-7 year fallow cycle is practiced and much effort goes into preparation, maintenance and exclusion of pigs.

Marsupials here are a tropical bandicoot, a cuscus and the Agile Wallaby also found in northern Australia, evidence for the recent landbridge. None are common

and all are hunted. Fruit bats and blossom bats are prominent groups absent from Tasmania.



Birds are not as common or diverse on smaller islands as on the PNG mainland. Familiar species include Sea Eagles, crested terns and the Sulphur Crested Cockatoo. Our most prominent bird locally is the common Koel, a cuckoo with a strident, occasionally nocturnal, call. Perhaps the most spectacular tropical birds visually are frigate-birds, aerial pirates which are extremely streamlined and regularly seen as flocks in silhouette.

Reptiles include crocodiles and turtles absent from modern Tasmania. Crocodiles are well known from a large mangrove swamp but not as common as previously, they are farmed on a small scale. Turtles of several kinds are taken by local people and nest on outlying islands. Pythons, monitors and geckoes, are families of reptiles which reach as far south as Victoria, but not Tasmania. Local skinks are extremely fast-moving, including one with an electric-blue tail used as a display.

Further notes will have to await a further bulletin. Invertebrates are prominent and often spectacular here. The marine world is

similarly colourful and diverse. Much of the detail and the neighbouring islands awaits further exploration. Wait for the next episode.

Don Hird

## History of the T.F.N. Club Revisited

by Andrew Walsh

There has been some discussion at the past few meetings with regards to the age of our club. In looking in our library I found a copy of the first issue of *The Tasmanian Naturalist* published in 1907, in which mention is made of the fact that at the time of publication the club had been in existence for over two years. Len Wall, at a recent meeting, also mentioned that his research had led him to find that the club had formed in 1904, and that he had previously written an article concerning the genesis of the club in *The Tasmanian Naturalist*. This was published in 1955, and it's probably worth revisiting some of that article to clear up the matter once and for all.

"A preliminary meeting to consider the foundation of a field naturalist's club in Hobart was held in the Royal Society's Room at the Tasmanian Museum, Hobart, on September 15, 1904, under the chairmanship of the Rev. H. H. Anderson. After Mr. A. M. Lea had outlined the objects of such a club, all present agreed that a club was desirable, and a committee was appointed to frame rules. The meeting then adjourned."

"On September 26, this committee presented its recommendations, and the rules drawn up were adopted. Thus the Tasmanian Field Naturalist Club came into being. Officers elected at this meeting were:- President,

Dr. Gerard Smith, Vice Pres. Mr. S. Clemes, Hon secretary-Treasurer, Mr. E. A. Elliott, Committee, Messrs. E. S. Anthony, A. Conlon, W. M. Harrison, A. M. Lea, A. Morton and J. C. Smith."

"The first field excursion held by the club was to Cascades on October 22, 1904, and this feature of its activities has continued throughout the years. In addition to day trips the early members set a record, perhaps unique in Australia, in organising an annual camp extending over five days."

"Ladies took a keen interest in the Club from its inception, the first two being elected to the membership on Feb 27, 1905. The local daily newspaper had much to say at the time about the behaviour of these "intruders" in a gentleman's domain, but the publicity given seems to have served the Club well, as the membership had increased to 62 by the end of the first year- a very fine result."

"The Club lost no time in making its presence felt in the community. One of its first acts was to protest strongly at the disposal of a complete set of Goulds 'Birds of Australia' from the Public Library, Hobart, for a comparatively small sum. It was, unfortunately, too late to prevent the sale, but its prompt action impressed itself on the city fathers."

"During the year 1907 discussion arose as to a suitable form of badge for the club, and it was finally agreed to adopt the platypus as its emblem."

Extract from: History of the T.F.N. Club

By Leonard E. Wall

The Tasmanian Naturalist  
Volume II No. 3 Feb 1955

## Outing Reports

### Snug Tiers 4th May 1997

By Kylie McKendrick

The May Field Nats excursion was up to the Snug Tiers and was lead by Peter McQuillan. It was an enjoyable outing with around about 22 of us turning up to wander along the old road at a leisurely pace looking at all sorts of plants, fungi and beasties. After Peters talk at the previous meeting on seed dispersal, we were on the lookout for Currawong pellets and the like (*found heaps too: Ed.*). We saw lots of beetles including an extra groovy one by the name of *Caryopsida deplaneta* (I hope that's how it is spelt!), one snail was found in the act of devouring another, also seen were three velvet worms, an assassin bug and a fungi that David 'The Fungiman' Ratkowsky had never seen before.

### Forestier Peninsula 6 July 1997

by Kevin Bonham

Despite some enthusiasm at the meeting, only Audrey, Andrew and I eventually made it on the Forestier Peninsula trip to look for millipedes, centipedes and other invertebrates. We turned off at Murdunna and headed down a Forestry road called Hylands Road, aiming to find some oldgrowth habitat near the coast. However we only got as far as the start of the High Yellow Bluff track, where we searched for about an hour. We also later searched at a creek called Bellettes Creek, a few kilometres to the west. Both sites were in roughly 50 year old wet sclerophyll regrowth although the first was generally more open.

We found millipedes quite difficult to find at both sites; Bob

Mesibov tells me this is normal for both peninsulas. At the first site we only got a few specimens of each species, a red *Rankodesmus* which Audrey found on a tree stump creating most interest. At the second site a small yellow or white *Atopodesmus* was very common especially under logs but other species were very scarce. In all we found six millepede species and three centipede species, and Bob Mesibov reports that although we found nothing rare the finds are useful records.

Unusually, snails were much commoner than millepedes at both sites, with ten species being found. The semi-snails *Helicarion cuvieri* and *H. rubicundus* were very common, with the two species sometimes living together, literally head-to-tail on the same piece of bark. We saw some very large specimens of *H. rubicundis*, a spectacular Forestier/Tasman Peninsula endemic with a yellow shell, green mantle, red and grey flanks and a purple foot. About the first piece of bark Andrew picked up also had a *Discocharopa mimosa* on it, a 75km range extension and a fluke as it is mainly a tree dweller. Other invertebrate finds included some interesting harvestmen and several different beetles. We also found a very bright Tasmanian Froglet (*Crinia tasmaniensis*) under a log.

I thank Bob Mesibov for identifying our specimens; the full list will be available once I have found it in the chaos of my flat.



L. Green

# BULLETIN OF THE TASMANIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

Nov 1997  
Editor Andrew Walsh

Number 288

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc. encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist* annually in October. People with a range of backgrounds and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (03 6227 8638) for further information, or write to GPO Box 68A Hobart 7001

## PROGRAM

General meetings start at 7:45pm on the first Thursday of the month in the Life Sciences Building at the University of Tasmania. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting at 10am outside the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance, Macquarie St. *If you are planning to attend an outing but not the meeting prior, check as to the timing of the excursion as sometimes unforeseen changes occur.*

6<sup>th</sup> Nov Craig Proctor. Shoreline Crabs.

8<sup>th</sup> Nov(Sat) Orchid, bird and crab walk at Orford.

4<sup>th</sup> Dec Andrew Hingston. Bumblebees.

7<sup>th</sup> Dec (Sun) Crabtree. A walk up through the head of Crabtree Valley.

January 1998 No General Activities

5<sup>th</sup> Feb Sue Baker. Maquarie Is. and Giant Petrels.

7<sup>th</sup> Feb (Sat) Field trip yet to be finalised. Further details in the January bulletin issue.

4<sup>th</sup> Mar AGM & Presidents Address

7<sup>th</sup> Mar (Sun) Field trip yet to be finalised. Further details in the January bulletin issue.

## Other Activities

The following guided walks are conducted by the Hobart City Council for their Spring Bushcare Activities. Bookings are essential, phone Kerry Heatley at H.C.C 6238 2884

21<sup>st</sup> Nov (Fri) 8:30-10:00 PM Possum Prowl, Waterworks Reserve

26<sup>th</sup> Nov (Wed) 2:00-4:30 PM Waratahs and Organ Pipes, Wellington Park. A medium grade walk (some uphill walking required).

## Subscriptions are due for the Calendar Year 1998

Adult \$20.00

Junior/Concession \$15.00

Family \$25.00

‘The Tasmanian Naturalist’ Subscription only (Aust) \$14.00

‘The Tasmanian Naturalist’ Subscription only (Library) \$25.00

‘The Tasmanian Naturalist’ Subscription only (Overseas) \$25.00

Membership also includes an annual subscription to the journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist*. A membership application form is also enclosed in this issue for any of your friends (might make a good Christmas present ☺).

## **The Peter Murrell Nature Reserve and Conservation Area**

In August this year the Dept. of Environment and Land Management released the Interim Management Strategy (IMS) for the Peter Murrell Nature Reserve and Conservation Area. Most people are probably more familiar with the more common name of the Huntingfield and Coffee Creek area, which is situated behind the suburb of Blackmans Bay just south of the Antarctic Division. Some members of The Field Nats Club have been involved with the local landcare group, who have been lobbying for the area's protection. The reserve, which consists of a nature reserve and a conservation area, contains important forest, buttongrass and heathland communities. It holds over 200 native plants species, including 35 orchid species, two of which are rare in Tasmania. The area contains six poorly reserved plant communities and also supports several rare or threatened vertebrate and invertebrate species, including the 40-spotted pardalote, the eastern barred bandicoot, several moth species and a very rare scarab beetle.

Recreational management strategies have been devised to reduce the conflict between users (such as walkers, joggers, dog owners, horse riders, trail bike riders, naturalists and fishers) but to also protect the reserves' values. Other major management strategies include eradication or control of gorse and other weeds, rehabilitation of damage, elimination of dumping in the reserves and protection from wildfire in co-operation with local landowners, community groups and other authorities.

Of particular interest to naturalists, the IMS publication contains a list of all bird species, mammals, reptiles and orchids recorded in the reserve, as well as maps detailing vegetation communities, reserve and conservation area boundaries, and recreational use boundaries. The reserves will be managed by Parks and Wildlife Service officers of the South Central District based at Mt. Nelson.

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## **Outing Report**

### **10<sup>th</sup> Aug Mountain River Aquatic**

#### **Invertebrates**

**Andrew Walsh**

Eighteen people turned out for a great day of river sampling. As mentioned in Leon Barmuta's talk at

the meeting before the excursion, Mountain River (located north of Huonville), experienced a large, rare, 1 in 15 year mid-summer flood in 1993, dramatically changing the macroinvertebrate community structure at the time and for several months after. Armed with nets, buckets, trays and a field stereo-microscope, we visited three locations along the river to see what aquatic invertebrates we could find, and to investigate any changes along the river.

The phenomenon of longitudinal zonation of stream fauna is due to geomorphological changes along a stream. The upper reaches of streams are basically erosional whereas the lower reaches are depositional. Thus fauna in the upper reaches are less tolerant of high temperatures, require high concentrations of oxygen and frequently display marked adaptations to unidirectional flow. In the lower reaches, the fauna is characterised by being tolerant to higher water temperatures, lower oxygen and show no marked adaptations to unidirectional flow (Williams 1980).

Given the time constraints, and lack of expertise, we were generally unable to classify down to the species levels (see Table 1). We did notice, however, differences between the sites in terms of the biota. While some of this effect may have been due to a general reduction in the sampling intensity as lunchtime approached, there was marked differences in the river bed habitats at each site. For example, at the first site, where the river bed consisted mainly of cobbles and river sediments, Caddisfly larvae were generally of the form illustrated below, i.e. protected in tubular larval cases made from fine river gravel. At the second site, where some areas of still water occurred due to the position of the bedrock, specimens of the Caddisfly family Helicopsychidae were found, which many of us mistook for snails because of their helically arranged larval cases. At the third site, where water flowed quickly over the bedrock dominated river bed, Caddisfly larvae were found hidden inside bedrock crevices with no larval cases, but with web-like silken nets that filtered food from the water flowing downstream (i.e. a unidirectional flow adaptation).

*Reference: Williams, W.D. 1980. Australian Freshwater Life. Published by The Macmillan Company of Aust. Pty Ltd.*

## Mountain River Sampling Sites

**Site 1:** Beneath bridge on Sawyers Creek Road (AMG Grid Ref 50872434)

Mainly cobble stones (ca. <30cm diameter) and sediment.

**Site 2:** Beneath bridge on Bennetts Road (AMG Grid Ref 5182459)

Mixture of cobble stones and bedrock and small areas of still water.

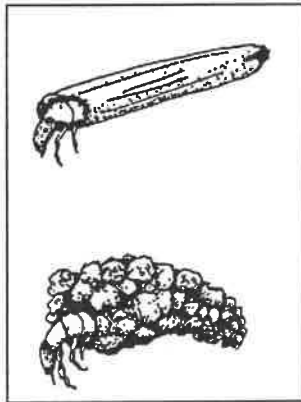
**Site 3:** Beneath Bridge at the end of Mountain River Road (AMG Grid Ref 51112479)

Mainly Bedrock and large boulders and cobbles (ca>30cm)

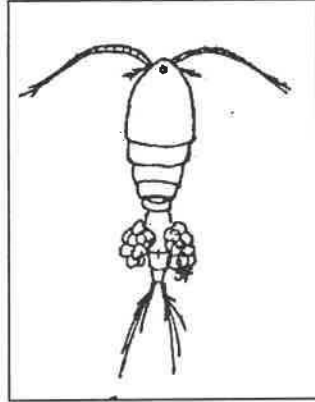
**Table 1. Biota collected at Mountain River sampling sites.**

<u>Site 1</u>	<u>Site 2</u>	<u>Site 3</u>
<b>Larvae;</b>	<b>Larvae;</b>	<b>Larvae;</b>
Trichoptera (Caddisflies)	Trichoptera (Caddisflies)	Trichoptera (Caddisflies)
Ephemeroptera (Mayflies)	Ephemeroptera (Mayflies)	Ephemeroptera (Mayflies)
Plecoptera (Stone Fly)	Plecoptera (Stone Fly)	Plecoptera (Stone Fly)
Coleoptera (Beetles)	Coleoptera (Beetles)	Chironomidae (Midge Fly)
	Chironomidae (Midge Fly)	Culicidae (Mosquito)
	Culicidae (Mosquito)	
<b>Adults;</b>	<b>Adults;</b>	<b>Adults;</b>
Annelid (Worm)	Planaria (Flatworms)	Chironomidae (Midge Fly)
Ancyliidae (Limpet)	Hydrobiidae (Freshwater Snail)	
Hydrobiidae (Freshwater Snail)		
Cyclopoid Copepod	Cyclopoid Copepod	Cyclopoid Copepod

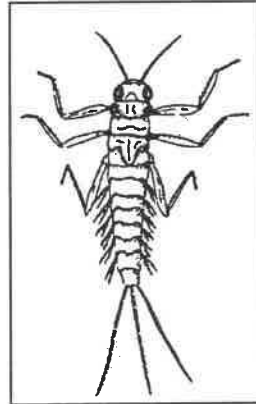
Types of aquatic fauna, similar to those collected at Mountain River. Illustrations by Janet Fenton.



Caddisfly larvae



Copepod



Mayfly nymph



Stonefly nymph.

## Wanted: Dung or Alive!

The Australian Fungi Mapping Scheme have put a call out for dung! A new series of books is being written about Australian Fungi- the next one will be about fungi found on Australian dung. They require small collections of native **herbivore** dung (no carnivores' dung please) e.g. wallaby, wombat, bettong. The specimens need to be dried and should fill approximately two small film canisters.

To air dry your collection, place the dung on a dry paper towel or two, then into an open cardboard box. This can be put onto a high shelf and left for a week or two, or until the dung is very light and dry (it doesn't smell). Make sure the samples are clearly labelled and kept separate from one another. When dried, place them in a paper bag, folded at the top and stapled, together with an information label attached to the outside of the bag. The label should include the following;

**NAME** of the collector

**DATE** of collection

**PLACE** of collection

**GRID REF** Australian Map Grid reference (see Bob Mesibovs' article on map references in The Tasmanian Naturalist 1997)

**ALTITUDE** if known

**HABITAT** e.g. forest, farmland, roadside, walking track, sand dunes, etc.

**HABITAT VEGETATION** e.g. Eucalypts

**DUNG FROM WHAT ANIMAL** species name. If species name not known, use general description, e.g. bandicoot, possum etc.

**SEND TO:**

FUNGIMAP DUNG SURVEY

Dr Tom May

National Herbarium of Victoria

Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, Vic 3141

## Butterfly Name Changes

In a paper published in the recent Australian Journal of Entomology, Braby *et. al.* have produced a provisional list of common Australian butterfly names in an effort to standardise their common names. Scientific names can change due to differences in opinions between taxonomists or as new information becomes available, however common names, once established, need not change. Common names have the potential for stability regardless of taxonomic status. Braby *et. al.* emphasise that the list is not intended, at this stage, to form the definitive standard list of names and they hope all readers of their paper will comment on the suitability of the proposed names and make suggestions about those they feel unsuitable. They believe a stable set of good common names will be useful in promoting a wider interest in Lepidoptera, and that appropriate common names will be more acceptable in discussions and deliberations by local councils, political parties and other groups when dealing with conservation issues. Many of the changes affect Tasmanian butterfly names, so below is the species and common name list from the Butterflies of Tasmania book (McQuillan, 1994, published by the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club) as well as the proposed common names suggested by Braby *et. al.*

Reference: Braby, M. F., Atkins, A. F., Dunn, K. L., Woodger, T. A., & Quick, W. N. B. 1997. A Provisional list of common names for Australian butterflies. *Australian Journal of Entomology*, Volume 36, Part 3.

Species	Common name in Butterflies of Tasmania book	Common name suggested by Braby et al.
<i>Trapezites lutea</i>	Rare White-spot Skipper	Yellow Ochre
<i>Anisynta dominula</i>	Dominula Skipper	Two-Brand Grass-skipper
<i>Pasma tasmanica</i>	Tasmanica Skipper	Two-spotted Grass-skipper
<i>Antipodia chaostola</i>	Chaostola Skipper	Heath Sand-skipper
<i>Hesperilla chrysotricha</i>	Chrysotricha Skipper	Golden-haired Sedge-skipper
<i>Hesperilla donnysa</i>	Donnysa Skipper	Varied Sedge-skipper
<i>Hesperilla idothea</i>	Flame Skipper	Flame Sedge-skipper
<i>Hesperilla masteri</i>	Masters' Skipper	Chequered Sedge-skipper
<i>Oreisplanus munionga</i>	Marrawah Skipper	Alpine Sedge-skipper
<i>Taractrocera papyria</i>	White Grass-dart	White-banded Grass-dart
<i>Ocybadistes walkeri</i>	Yellow-banded Dart	Green Grass-dart
<i>Graphium macleayanum</i>	Macleays' Swallowtail	Macleays' Swallowtail
<i>Belenois java</i>	Caper White	Caper White
<i>Pieris rapae</i>	Cabbage White	Cabbage White
<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Wanderer	Monarch
<i>Danaus chrysippus</i>	Lesser Wanderer	Lesser Wanderer
<i>Argynnia hobartia</i>	Hobart Brown	Tasmanian Brown
<i>Geitoneura klugii</i>	Klugs' Xenica	Marbled Xenica
<i>Heteronympha cordace</i>	Bright-eyed Brown	Bright-eyed Brown
<i>Heteronympha merope</i>	Common Brown	Common Brown
<i>Heteronympha penelope</i>	Shouldered Brown	Shouldered Brown
<i>Nesoxenica leprea</i>	Leprea Brown	Delicate Xenica
<i>Oreixenica lathoniella</i>	Common Silver Xenica	Silver Xenica
<i>Oreixenica orichora</i>	Orichora Brown	Spotted Alpine Xenica
<i>Oreixenica ptunarra</i>	Ptunarra Brown	Ptunarra Xenica
<i>Junonia villida</i>	Meadow Argus	Meadow Argus
<i>Vanessa itea</i>	Australian Admiral	Yellow Admiral
<i>Vanessa kershawi</i>	Australian Painted Lady	Australian Painted Lady
<i>Paralucia aurifera</i>	Bright Copper	Bright Copper
<i>Pseudalmenus chlorinda</i>	Tasmanian Hairstreak	Silky Hairstreak
<i>Candalides acastus</i>	Blotched Blue	Blotched Dusky-blue
<i>Neolucia agricola</i>	Fringed Blue	Fringed Heath-blue
<i>Neolucia hobartensis</i>	Mountain Blue	Montane Heath-blue
<i>Neolucia mathewi</i>	Mathews' Blue	Broom Heath-blue
<i>Theclinesthes serpentata</i>	Chequered Blue	Salt-bush Blue
<i>Lampides boeticus</i>	Pea Blue	Long-tailed Pea-blue
<i>Zizina labradus</i>	Common Grass-blue	Common Grass-blue
<i>Eurema smilax</i>	Small Grass-yellow	Small Grass-yellow
<i>Appias paulina ega</i>	Common Albatross	Yellow Albatross