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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST



Monthly Newsletter of the
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club

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OFFICERS OF CLUB FOR 1990 - 91

PRESIDENT	Kris Carnell	835268
VICE-PRESIDENTS	Ray Marsden	811593
	Jean Harslett B.E.M.	833185
SECRETARY	Desley McDonagh	813074
Treasurer	Julia Brown	
Newsletter Editor	Margaret Carnell	835268
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Val White & Dore McCosker	
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Flora & Fauna Officer	Brian McDonagh	841284
Geology Officer	Colin Hockings	811978
Youth Officer	Robin McCosker	835371
Bushwalking Officer	Errol Walker	812008
Librarian	Esme Colley	812927
Committee	Nominated Officials with Power to co opt	

Meetings: 4th Wednesday of each Month at Q.C.W.A. Rooms at 8pm.

Outings: The Sunday PRECEDING the 4th Wednesday of each Month.

Annual Subscriptions: Single \$8.00 Family \$15.00 per annum

Rent: Donation per family per meeting.

AIMS OF THE CLUB

1. To study all branches of Natural History.
2. Preservation of the Flora and Fauna of Queensland.
3. Encouragement of a spirit of protection towards native birds, animals and plants.
4. To assist where possible in scientific research.
5. To publish a monthly newsletter and post to members.

ADDRESS CHECK

Could all members please check that their address is correct, and if not notify the secretary immediately.

COPY FOR NEWSLETTER

Could all contributors to the newsletter please have their copy in the hands of the editor by the second Sunday of the month if at all possible. Copy may be sent to P.O.Box 33, Severnlea 4352 or left with Sylvia Murphy at Chelsea House & Garden at the Stanthorpe Plaza.

MINUTES OF THE JUNE MEETING OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC. HELD IN THE C.W.A. ROOMS ON WEDNESDAY 26TH JUNE AT 8.00 P.M.

Vice-President Jean Harslett conducted the meeting in the absence of President Kris Carnell. Jean welcomed all present, particularly Vic Torrens from the Ambulance who was to be the guest speaker for the evening.

Attendance: and apologies as per attendance book.

Minutes: of the May meeting were adopted as a correct record on the motion of Noor Davis, seconded by Mary Walters and carried.

Correspondence: Inward:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Richmond Valley Nats | - Newsletter |
| 2. Darling Downs Nats | - Darling Downs Naturalist |
| 3. E. Reis | - Thanks for letter of thanks and book. |
| 4. Toowoomba Nats | - Footprints |
| 5. Flinders University | - Ad. for book "Towards Ecological Sustainability" |
| 6. Kenna family | - Subscription for 1991-92 |
| 7. Clarke | - " " " |
| 8. Australia Post | - Receipt for Magazine Registration. |
| 9. Simpson & Paulsen | - Subscription for 1991-92 |
| 10. Donges | - " " " |
| 11. Spence | - " " " |

O-utward :

1. Round the Ridges 4 QS

It was moved by Val White and seconded by Errol Walker that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted. Carried.

Treasurer's Report:

Statement for 23/5/91 to 26/6/91		
Bank balance as at 23/5/91		261.86
Receipts		
Subscriptions		
Room rent collection	13.00	
Change postage	2.00	15.00
		276.68

Expenditure

Room rent ;	10.00	
Magazine Duplication	6.00	
Magazine Postage	26.00	
Petty Cash	15.00	57.00
Bank balance as at 26/6/91		\$219.68

Accounts to be passed for payment; Room Rent - \$10.00; Magazine Duplication - \$6.00; Magazine Postage \$24.00; Bulk Postage - \$75/00.

Moved Julia Brown seconded Frank James that the treasurer's report be adopted and the accounts be passed for payment. Carried.

Outing Report: The June outing report was presented by Patience James. The outing went well and four ute loads of rubbish were removed from the area around the Red Bridge.

July Outing: Sunday 21st will be to Mt McKenzie under the leadership of Kris and Margaret Carnell, leaving Weersona Park at 9.00 a.m.

MINUTES: (Contd.)

Next Meeting: July 24th, Annual Meeting; "Remember Last Year" Rob and Errol will arrange as they usually do.

General Business: The Secretary was asked to write to the Shire Council asking that two dumped car bodies in the red bridge area be removed.

Vice President Jean welcomed Vic Torrens from the ambulance service and gave a short history of the Ambulance service. Part of the programme was some slides taken and shown by Frank James of an accident and rescue from Mt Norman. These slides were shown, then Vic Torrens gave some advice for first aid should accidents happen while on outings. This advice will be very helpful for future outings.

Val White moved a vote of thanks to Frank and Vic and this was carried by acclamation.

JUNE OUTING REPORT

The outing on Sunday 23rd June was different from our usual trips.

We assembled at the bottom of Granite Street, at 1 p.m., and proceeded to walk to the Red Bridge (which is the railway bridge over Quart Pot Creek.) The object was to clean up rubbish and old bottles left around in the bush, some of it having been left there for years, in fact going back to the tin mining days.

There were 24 people all carrying woolies bags, and a back up of three utility trucks plus shovels and brooms.

A total of 4½ truckloads of rubbish was taken to the council dump, plus some bottles left at the Scout's bin in Marsh Street.

After our strenuous work we retired to James' backyard for a well earned cup of tea and a sit down. The party broke up at sunset.

The weather was absolutely perfect and we all felt it was a good job well done.

Patience James

PRE-OUTING REPORT FOR 21ST JULY

The outing on 21st July is to be in the Tenterfield district. We will meet at Weeroona Park at 9.00a.m. and travel to Tenterfield where we will turn right into Molesworth Street. Our first stop will be at Ghosi Gully where there are spectacular examples of erosion. We will then continue to Mt MacKenzie where we will have morning tea. Hope it's a fine day and bring your binoculars, as there are spectacular views.

From Mt MacKenzie we will return to Tenterfield to look at the cork oak tree which was planted in 1861 and is believed to be the biggest in Australia.

We will then travel south along The Scrub Road. As we pass the Tenterfield town water supply, look out for black swans. About 18km south of Tenterfield we will reach The Scrub Picnic Area, where there are 2 barbeques and limited water. Some of us may like to have a barbeque lunch. Part of the road is gravel, but is trafficable by conventional vehicles.

There is a short walk through the scrub. Of particular note are some huge forest trees, vine scrub and walking stick palms. Also notice the transition between Eucalypt forest and Rainforest.

If we have time we will continue along the road to a small dam where there are quite a number of birds, including the New England honeyeater; and banksias, heath and wattle in bloom.

Those with high clearance vehicles may like to continue a few kilometres and return via the Jondol Forest Road and Sandy Flat. The rest will backtrack to Tenterfield and home.

Kris and Margaret Carnell

BIRDS IN MY GARDEN

It's two years on the July meeting night since I bought this property at 4 Pierpoint Street: settlement date was July 24, 1989.

The block has quite a number of beautiful trees. I actually bought 'a park/garden with a house attached'. There are two large eucalypts, peppermints I'm told; one kumera wattle (according to brother Brian the largest and best in captivity); a number of melaleuca, some quite large some small; two magnificent Arizona Cypress; two native cypress, a number of very large cotoneaster; two lilac (one white and one lilac); one mulberry tree (which is not a success); one persimmon (likewise) and a few other shrubs which can be forgotten for the object of this exercise. (I am told that Isabella grapes are not grapes).

Since I moved in here I have kept a record of the birds that I have observed here in the garden and I write the following for your interest. My neighbours must have thought that I was 'odd' at the very least because of all the time I spent skygazing - or gazing into the eucalypts - till they realized that I was bird watching.

Several pied butcher birds will take cheese from my hand as I feed them on the grape trellis. I've only seen one grey butcher bird on two separate occasions, but the pied ones are around most of the year. The first winter here I fed them daily, but there is most certainly more food around for them now, and I only see them occasionally. One is braver than the other - it will take food from my hand without hesitation, but the other is much more cautious. One usually sits on a high tree in the neighbours' place, then joins the other when I leave food there and go away. One of them would, I am sure, come in and sit on the sink if there wasn't a screen on the window. He hassles me if I don't get food when he wants it.

The kookaburras ate a lot of food I put out for them the first winter, but they just 'hang around' now. It is good that they can get enough food for themselves.

One summer there were a number of scarlet honeyeaters in the bottlebrush, but I haven't seen them since. They must come and go. One day a blue faced honeyeater called in at the spider webs outside the lounge room window, but he has not come back.

There are of course, numbers of magpies, peewees, sparrows, currawongs, silver-eyes and yellow-rumped thornbills.

Occasionally sighted at 4 Pierpoint Street are willy wag tails, wrens, yellow robins, spurwing plovers, leather heads, starlings, wattle birds, and honeyeaters

Sometimes these are so high up in the trees that I cannot identify them except as honeyeaters. I have identified white-eared honeyeaters as well as others mentioned.

The eastern spinebills enjoyed the red salvia when it was in bloom - they took the nectar from it 'a la humming bird'. One discovered that he could sit on the rail, reach the flowers and get his fill of nectar with little effort.

Two parrots, either pale headed or yellow resellas made a very fleeting visit one day, as did a crimson rosella.

Overhead I have seen wood ducks, black cockatoos, several hawks and what looked like sea-gulls but maybe I was mistaken that time.

When I first came here I put the food on the ground at the base of the grape (sorry Isabella) trellis for the birds. I heard a cry of anguish from a butcher bird one day, looked out and there was a cat sitting by the food, the butcher bird on the trellis yelling its head off. I chased the cat, and put a feeding tray on the trellis. One stray cat used to climb up the trellis and eat the birds' food. I haven't seen that cat since and am pleased about that, but it had obviously been dumped by some irresponsible human without the stamina to get rid of it, and not just put it out to add to the danger to our native birds.

I get a great amount of pleasure from my birds, and encourage you to take time to look at and listen to the many and varied birds we have in this district.

Desley McDonagh

JULY MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 24th at 8 p.m. This will be the Annual Meeting so there will be no Management Committee meeting beforehand. The programme for the night is "Remember Last Year" with Robin and Errol co-ordinating. We have arranged to borrow a projector that will project prints onto a screen, so if you have any bring them along.

It is with regret that we announce the death, in England, of foundation member Flo Tremear, at the end of May.

CAPE HILLSBOROUGH - BIRDWATCHER'S PARADISE

It was a gloriously sunny day when Kris and I arrived at Smalleys Beach at Cape Hillsborough National Park for a few day's camping. The first thing we noticed on arrival was the height of the picnic table. I think it was meant to camp under, rather than sit at, as the table top was around my chin level when I sat down. The second thing was the scrub turkey which strolled nonchalantly through the campsite. There was also a green tree ants' nest in a broadleaved tree a couple of metres from our tent. The ants were very busy "sewing" the nest together with their larvae when we arrived.

At breakfast the next morning we were kept very busy identifying all the different birds which came to visit. There were fig birds, (which sounded like parrots in the trees); yellow honeyeaters, leaden flycatchers, grey fantails and spangled drongos - all new to us apart from the fantails. We didn't know where to look first.

For our first walk we decided on a gentle stroll along the edge of the mangroves. What a delight it was! We were accompanied most of the way by grey fantails. As a matter of fact we named them all "Punch" as there's no show without Punch, and they appeared on every walk we took.

When we sat down to have a drink we caught our first glimpse of the dusky honey-eater, and a pair of yellow sunbirds. They were very beautiful and quite tame. They were feeding in the large melaleuca trees bordering the mangrove. When we cut through the scrub towards the beach we saw a shining bronze cuckoo, and a couple of pigeons. There was an oyster catcher on the mudflats and a forest kingfisher. Later in a different part of the park we were to see a mangrove kingfisher and a sacred one. Of the 130 species of birds listed as being sighted in the national park we saw fifty.

On arrival back at camp we noticed hundreds of native bees around our fire-place. Kris had inadvertently shifted their hive which was in a log that was in front of the fire. I had sat on it the night before. The poor things were quite distressed until we shifted it back a couple of feet to where it had been, and they could find the way home.

Our most ambitious outing was a walk from Smalleys Beach over the hills of Cape Hillsborough. I'd rate parts of it at 9 out of 10. We were amazed when walking through the rainforest, or perhaps I should say climbing, to see thousands of butterflies in a gully, mostly blue-igers, but a few velvety black ones as well. We also disturbed a dark brown fellow who lived in the leaf litter and looked like a fallen leaf when he closed his wings. As well as the butterflies we saw wompoo pigeons high in the trees, and developed semi-permanent crinks in our necks from looking up.

From one of the lookouts we could see a full circle of beautiful views of the Whitsundays and inland. The vegetation changed from Rainforest to open forest with hundreds of grass trees. The walk back around the road was quite arduous, although we did see quite a few birds on the way.

Our attempts at spotlighting were remarkable unsuccessful, although we heard a flock of birds flying over honking loudly. During the night we heard curlews calling and dingoes howling. Apart from a few wallabies, we saw very few mammals, and were surprised at how few sea birds we saw.

One of our walks was through Secret Valley where there is the remains of an aboriginal fish trap. It was here we saw our first mangrove kingfisher. On another walk we were lucky enough to see a green turtle swimming in the water below the cliffs, and be entertained by a rufous shrike thrush giving a concert.

After three days we were to leave for Yeppoon, so we packed most of our goods and chattels ready for a quick getaway in the morning. When morning came I decided I couldn't bear to leave, so we stayed another two nights, and went swimming at high tide. At low tide the water is about 800 metres away. We really enjoyed our extra time, as it was so peaceful, and we could do some more exploring.

I would really recommend this spot to anyone who likes a quiet holiday, and doesn't mind primitive toilets and no running water. But be careful, you will want to go back.

Margaret Carnell

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair. In the central place of your heart there is a wireless station. So long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, grandeur, courage and power from the earth, from men and from the infinite - so long are you young. When the wires are all down and the central places of your heart are covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then you are grown old indeed!

