

MARCH 1994
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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST



Monthly Newsletter of the
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club

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 it to members.

Meetings: 4th Wednesday of each Month at QCWA Rooms at 8.00pm.
Outings: The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each Month.
Subscriptions: Single \$8.00 Family \$15.00 per annum July to June.
Rent : Donation per family per meeting.
Address: Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc., P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe Q 4380.

OFFICERS OF THE CLUB FOR 1993-94

President	Rob McCosker	83 5371
Vice-Presidents	Desley McDonagh	81 3074
Secretary	Millie Marsden	81 1593
Treasurer	Julia Brown	
Newsletter Editor	Geoff Walker	81 2008
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Julie Beddow & Patience James	
Publicity Officer	Patience James	81 1853
Librarian	Esme Colley	81 2927
Management Committee	President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer.	

SCALE OF DIFFICULTY FOR WALKS ON NATS OUTINGS

1. Flat walking, road or track.
2. Road or track gentle hills.
3. Track, some hilly sections.
4. Track, some steep sections.
5. Cross country easy open forest, gentle slopes.
6. Track, steep section common, with steps.
7. Cross country some hills, some thick undergrowth.
8. Cross country steep section with scrambles over rocks etc.
Some thick undergrowth.
9. Cross country, steep, hilly, rough, thick undergrowth.
10. Mountain climbing, hard going, higher level of fitness or plenty of time required.

STATE FOREST CAMPING CODE

Camping in State Forest Parks will be more enjoyable for you and other visitors if you observe this simple camping code.

- All plants and animals are protected - please don't disturb or damage them.
 - Keep your camp clean and tidy and respect your surroundings. At the end of your stay, make sure the site is tidy for those who follow.
 - Tables and fireplaces are for all to use - please don't monopolise them.
- Leave waterfront areas clear for everyone - pitch your tent well back from the creek bank.
- Light your fire only in the fireplaces provided. Use firewood sparingly.
- Be sure your fire is out before leaving.
- Avoid polluting creeks and lakes with soap, detergents or shampoo. Draw water in containers for washing purposes and dispose of used water well away from the stream.
 - Be aware of plants and creatures that might make your stay uncomfortable for example, leeches, ticks and nettle.
 - Don't leave clothing or footwear out on the ground overnight - biting insects, spiders or centipedes may crawl in. Always knock out your shoes before putting them on.
 - Take care when swimming in creeks and waterholes - before entering the water check for depth, snags or other obstructions.
 - If you go bushwalking, always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
 - Camping is limited to two weeks. If you wish to stay for a longer period, please contact the local Forestry Office.

This code applies to most places where Nats. go on outings.

Well you wanted the magazine out early so here it is. It was amazing how everything came together for this magazine with everything arriving only two days after the February meeting. This included over one and a half pages, of secretary's report, arriving from Desley the very next day! No I won't guarantee it will be this early every month, this one had everything going for it. If all articles can be submitted at least 2 weeks or earlier after the meeting that should be sufficient. April's magazine deadline therefore is the **6th of April** giving our country members more time to be aware of coming activities and plan accordingly.

REPORT ON FEBRUARY ACTIVITY

The wet weather finally caught up with the Nats Club for its scheduled outing on the 20th. Ralph and Leila reported that conditions for the trip to Wylie Creek were unfavourable and it was decided to cancel the outing on Sunday morning. Since I felt there would be some stalwart members who would turn up at the park anyway, I thought they might be interested in joining in with the "Clean up Australia Day" being organised at the top of Mt. Marley. We were provided with bags and registration forms and then set off to clean up the Quart Pot Creek in the vicinity of the "Red Bridge".

Work has begun here by members of the LEAP Scheme to construct paths and an extensive park and recreation area. The Anzac Street access has been blocked to vehicle traffic, which meant we had to carry our bags of rubbish some distance to the parking area. Hopefully this will also discourage thoughtless people from carting and leaning their rubbish in there in the future.

We had a break for morning tea at about 10.30 am then continued the job of picking up the enormous amount of broken glass. In one place in an area of about a square metre we picked out beer bottle glass to a depth of about 200 mm before giving up - it seemed to go on forever! We have another clean-up day scheduled for July and I can assure members that there is plenty more in this area. We called a halt at about 12 o'clock and drove around to the park being developed adjacent the new weir at the Granite Street bridge. Here we viewed the work done so far and discussed the proposal of the Historic Botanic Garden to commemorate early botanists of the district, before heading home for lunch.

My thanks to those who volunteered so willingly.

Rob McCosker

DETAILS OF CAMPOUT MARCH 19/20

Departure time for the camp will now be at 9.00 am from Weeroona Park. Knowing how all Nats members enjoy their morning Smoko I wouldn't dare think of travelling while 10.00 am rolled around. Smoko will then be had at Tenterfield at 10.00 am. After Smoko cars will then proceed along the Bruxner Highway for approximately 50 km before turning right into Long Gully Road. Travelling along this road we will make various stops along this very scenic route. This then joins onto Rocky River Road which follows Malara Creek. We will eat our packed lunch along this road before arriving at our Campsite during the afternoon. Members can do as they wish with the remaining daylight hours. (Perhaps a walk along the creek). Sunday morning will involve a leisurely walk along the creek to a shepherds hut with many old items still inside and saddles etc hanging outside. Lunch will be taken back at camp after which we will break camp and head for home.

Cars should leave Weeroona Park with a full tank of fuel. Water quality cannot be guaranteed from the creek so your own drinking water is advisable.

MEETING for MARCH 23RD

Programme for the March meeting will be a slide presentation by Ray & Millie Marsden on Tasmania

MINUTES OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC. FEBRUARY MEETING HELD IN THE CWA ROOMS, STANTHORPE ON FEB 23RD AT 8.00PM.

Opening: President Rob McCosker (who has taken over because of Alyson McColl's appointment as Postal Manager at St George) opened the meeting, welcoming all present, including three visitors, Oriel and Orla Nielsen and Sister Megall (?) from the Northern Territory.

Attendance & Apologies : as per attendance book.

Minutes :- It was moved by Julie Beddow and seconded by Ailsa Wilkinson that the minutes of the November meeting be accepted as a correct record. Carried.

Correspondence : Inward -

1. Twba Bushwalkers Club - Footprints - Dec, Jan, Feb
 2. Darling Downs Naturalist - Dec & Feb
 3. Queensland Naturalists Club - QNC News - Jan-Feb & The Queensland Naturalist Journal Vol 32 Nos 3 -4 December 1993.
 4. Urimbirra - Jan, Feb
 5. Richmond Valley Naturalists - Newsletter - Dec, February
 6. News Release - Edmund Casey MLA
 7. Dept of Environment & Heritage Qld - Policy Statement - Crown Native Forests.
 8. Between the Leaves - DPI
 9. John Coulter - Environment today
 10. Stanthorpe Shire Council - LEAP scheme.
 11. Directory of Australian Associations
 12. State Library of Queensland
 13. Matrix Office Systems - Account
 14. Commercial Union Insurance - Account
 15. Christmas Card from Hon Molly Robson.
 16. Victorian Naturalist - December
 17. Field Naturalist Club of Victoria - Australian Naturalist History Medallion.
 18. Bank Statement.
 19. Bio links - January 1994
 20. Aust & NZ Environment Council - Rangeland Issues Paper.
 21. Biodiversity & its value. Biodiversity Series Paper No 1.
 22. USQ Library - missing issues.
 23. Information Australia Group - promotion material.
- Outward - Information for 4QS & 4 WK for January outing and February activities.

It was moved by Margaret Carnell & seconded by Errol Walker that the inward correspondence be received & the outward adopted. Carried.

There was no Financial Statement as the Treasurer was not present.

Outing Reports- The Sunday outing was cancelled because of the weather, but 9 hardy souls joined 'Clean up Australia' and cleaned up around the Red Bridge. It was noted that there was lots of broken glass.

Next outing : Camp-out - still dependent on how much rain there has been. Leaving on Saturday 19th March 10.00 am, to tenterfield, thence to Rocky River. The next magazine will have details from leader Geoff Walker.

Letter to Bonners - Brian Dodd requested that a letter of thanks be sent to Dick Bonner thanking him for allowing us to be on his property for the January outing.

General Business :

1. Ads in the magazine - the meeting was in agreement that ads can be put in and the person doing so has to give an article for it. The matter of items to be advertised to be left to the editor.

2. LEAP - Jean Harslett described the area that is being cared for by this scheme. It was suggested that some of the flora identified by the early botanists including Cunningham be planted in a small area near the new bridge. Tom Archer reported that it would be a nice walk in about six months time. Kris Carnell (wearing his Council hat) told the members of Shire Council input in money and resources. The Council will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the area.

3. LAND CARE President Rob McCosker advised the meeting of a discussion he had had with Alex Harslett from Land Care on the matter of application for a grant of money for beautifying the area along the newly constructed lake. Kris Carnell moved and Gordon Davis seconded the motion that the grant as explained by the President be applied for. This was carried.

4. Notice of Motion - Gordon Davis moved the following motion which had been in the magazine -

To create within the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Incorporated a group called 'Learning for Pleasure' to be open to all members under the leadership of one person elected as a committee member for that purpose, that is to co-ordinate activities of the University of the Third Age to promote learning together in small Adult Education groups.'

Gordon explained the difficulty regarding costs of Incorporation (with no apparent benefits) for the members of U3A. The Nats club could be enriched by members joining to be part of the Adult Education Groups. In seconding the motion, Kris Carnell said that more financial members would help cover the fixed costs of running the club, also give added interest to the magazine with different articles. Several members enquired about the costs related to meetings, learning groups etc, and were assured by Gordon Davis that the costs would be covered by those attending, not the Field Nats.

The motion was put to the meeting and carried.

Those activities already underway in this group are :

French Conversation - at Jocelyn Bonners 1st & 3rd Wed 2.00 pm.

Ancient History - Wilkinsons - Monday 28th Feb 10.30 am.

Current Affairs - Contact Mary Walters.

5. Magazine - 1. Members were reminded pick up their magazine if they had advised that they would - to save postage.

2. Some discussion was held about the time of publication - maybe a deadline could be advised in each magazine for the next one. Geoff Walker (Editor) encouraged people to get items in on time - or early!!!

Programme - Errol Walker presented a programme on China, consisting of the usual excellent photography and commentary. Thank you Errol for taking us to places that many of us will never see for ourselves, but now can feel as if we did.

The meeting was then closed.

OUR NEIGHBOURS HAVE LEFT US

The Double-bars abandoned their first nest when it appeared almost complete, and started building again in another hanging basket even nearer to the front door. They completed this nest and then abandoned it also and we subsequently found they had deserted four eggs as well.

The frogmouths however, successfully reared two beautiful (?) chicks, and after leaving the nest the family roosted on the trees behind the house for almost a fortnight quite low down so that we could easily view them - one adult (? Mum) and the two young ones on one branch and the other adult (? Dad) on a branch nearby. They were always quite relaxed when we approached, even when the dogs were barking and chasing each other around at the start of the afternoon walk. It was quite amusing to see all the heads swivelling round to watch the dogs playing under 'their' tree, but if a stranger was with us they always became stiff and immobile until the apparent danger was over.

I hope they come back again next Spring.

Audrey Ridge

Sue Kenna pays for her Classified

On reading the last Nats newsletter I was pleased to see that our ad had been included but my pleasure soured a little when, on reading further, I found that in return I was expected to submit a story! What on earth could I write about? - I don't have the knowledge or expertise that so many other members have about the local area but - I am enthusiastic and it does seem only fair.....so here goes.

It's two years now since John, Erin and I moved from Warwick after 14 enjoyable years there. Although it had always been our aim to own a patch of 'wilderness' type bush and I found our place pristinely beautiful, the reality of being transported from the fringes of Warwick to the middle of a dry sclerophyll forest with a driveway a mile long was a great deal different.

For the best part of 18 months I wavered between total delight in the place and wanting to walk away from it all. Maybe an extreme living environment brings out that extreme reaction, I don't know.

I do know that it has been a huge challenge to our pioneering spirits and the highs and lows that we have experienced certainly enable us to empathise with the 'real' pioneers. We are tame by comparison.

We are keen environmentalists and our main concern has been minimum impact on our beautiful bush and the world's resources in general - hence using materials from our land or recycled timber from old buildings, a waterless composting toilet and a reed bed for absorption and purification of grey water.

We decided not to allow any domestic pets ie cats and dogs and now have the pleasure of many of the forest dwelling birds living close by. The tree creepers come up to the door mat to steal bits of fluff for their nests and the crimson rosellas and sacred kingfishers have been busy raising families all summer. The geckos and lizards go unmolested too and the wallabies merely raise their heads and gaze at us as we go past.

I thought I would never get used to the proximity of the forest - the wind howling through the trees at night. But living surrounded by the bush seeps into your consciousness - the mosses and lichens after rain, the light through the trees in the late afternoon, something flowering somewhere at any time of the year, the surprising orchids, the little rock gardens. Now, most other places I visit seem bare, over-grazed, contrived and crowded.

Whatever happens in the future this challenge has proved a learning experience for us all.

GOAL SETTING

Setting goals is like bathing.

It is unending. You cannot take one bath and think "There I'm done with that".

Both baths and goal setting are for the REST OF YOUR LIFE

QUART POT CREEK BEAUTIFICATION SCHEME

The Stanthorpe Field Nats Club is involved in this project in an advisory capacity and also now in a financial way with the application for a funding grant from the National Landcare Program. So that members may be a little more aware of the project, included below are the summary from the application form and a sketch of the area.

"This project will preserve the last section of riverine urban native habitat within Stanthorpe and by revegetation of the disturbed section, provide a suitable reserve for plant species first described by early botanists such as Cunningham, Schorticini and Bailey.

It is expected that the urban dwellers of Stanthorpe will be the main users of the area and being close to the town centre it will provide another attraction for visitors. Many teachers will use the historic and scientific resources of this project which should be completed by December 1994.

Rob McCosker

ON THE TRAIL OF THE CRUMBLING BANISTERS

Brenton Peters no longer does housecalls.

He gets enough evidence sent in by worried householders, builders and pest controllers to keep his files open. Where there's enough evidence to confirm his suspicions, he calls the Exterminators. There is a familiar pattern in every case; the mark of an active public enemy. One that entered our country undercover and infiltrated our government buildings.

The public enemy is *C. brevis*. Full name, *Cryptotermes brevis* (Walker) or West Indian drywood termite. *Crypto* means hidden. These pests are hard to find and very destructive. *C. brevis* has jumped ship in countries from Central America to South Africa. Timber entomologist Brenton Peters is Queensland's leading detective on the case.

In South Africa *C. brevis* cost the country millions because it had infiltrated for 30 years before it was discovered.

In Australia, we were lucky. An infestation discovered in Maryborough in 1966 was the first and the trail was still fresh. All building within 400 metres of an identified hideout were inspected. suspect houses were kept under surveillance every three years to ensure the villains did not escape.

Despite broadscale public awareness and eradication campaigns in 1974-5 and again in 1979-88, *C. brevis* is still active.

Brisbane residents would have noticed some of our most prominent public buildings draped in circus tents over the past few years. Beneath these bright exteriors the pests were being destroyed.

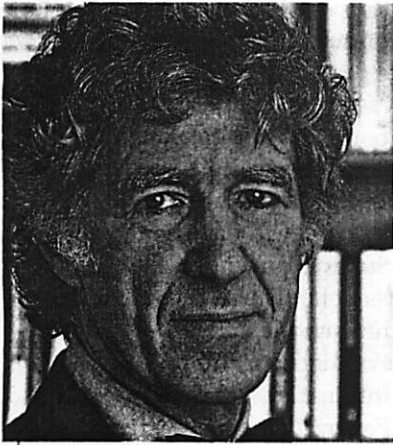
Queensland hands out the toughest treatment in the world, but some of these pests have still escaped. Furniture sold from infected buildings has taken *C. brevis* to other towns, and may even have delivered them south of the border.

Present reports confine its presence to a narrow coastal band in south-east Queensland, south of Bundaberg. But the fight continues.

The only clues *C. brevis* leaves are small piles of pellets - so small five to ten will fit on the head of a pin. They are uniform shapes, but take on a multitude of colours - light to dark brown; some times black or reddish

If you suspect C. brevis is active in your building, contact Timber research, P.O. Box 631, Indooroopilly 4068

LEARNING FROM HISTORY



Lester Brown

REVERSAL OF A TREND

This vast increases in production was equated with human progress; we expected it to rise continually. But now, within just a few years, this trend has been reversed - and with consequences we have yet to grasp. Meanwhile, other trends, once going nowhere, (or, at most, rising slowly) are suddenly soaring.

The discontinuities of the 1990s originate in the collision between expanding human numbers and needs and the constraints of the earth's natural systems. Among these are the capacity of the oceans to yield seafood, of grasslands to produce beef and mutton, of the hydrological cycle to produce fresh water, of crops to use fertiliser, of the atmosphere to absorb greenhouse gases, of people to breath polluted air and of forests to withstand acid rain. These constraints drew dramatically closer between 1950 and 1990, as the global economy expanded nearly fivefold, upsetting the natural balances that had lent some stability to historical economic trends.

POPULATION GROWTH

Another major source of pressure was unprecedented population growth. Those of us born before 1950 have seen a doubling of the world's population. In 1950, 37 million people were added to the world's population. Last year, 91 million were added; that is, a further addition of 250,000 people every day or a city the size of New York every month.

On a finite planet, such growth is beginning to take a social toll. The production of grain, perhaps the most basic economic measure of human

When the history of the late 20th Century is written, the 1990s may be seen as a decade of discontinuity - a time when familiar trends, which seemed likely to go on forever, came to abrupt bends and began descending abruptly. Prior to this period - since the Industrial Revolution began (c1760) - the world's production of steel, for example, and the amount of coal extracted rose almost uninterrupted. The harvest of grain has grown much faster than population since the middle of this century, steadily increasing the amount available both for direct consumption and for conversion into livestock products. Likewise, the oceanic fish catch more than quadrupled during this period, doubling the consumption of seafood per person.

well-being, increased 2.6 -fold from 1950 to 1984. Expanding at nearly 3 percent per year, it outstripped population growth, leading to an increase in per capita grain consumption of 40 percent over the 34-year period, improving nutrition and boosting consumption of livestock products - meat, milk, eggs, and cheese - throughout the world. But during the eight years since 1984, world grain output has expanded perhaps only one percent per year - and in per capita terms it has declined one percent per year since then - a particularly troubling change both because grain is a basic source of human sustenance and because of the likely difficulty in reversing it.

AT AN END

This faltering of basic foodstuffs was triggered by other, earlier discontinuities of growth - the supply of cropland, irrigation water and

agricultural technologies. Cropland, measured in terms of grain-harvested area, expanded more or less continuously from the beginning of agriculture until 1981. The spread of agriculture, initially from valley to valley and then from region to region and eventually from continent to continent, has come to an end. Since 1981, it has not increased at all. Gains of cropland in some countries have been offset by losses in others, as land is converted to non-farm uses and abandoned because of erosion.

Similarly with irrigation. After the middle of this century, the growth in irrigated areas accelerated, averaging nearly 3 percent per year until 1978. Then, as the number of prime dam construction sites diminished and underground aquifers were depleted by overpumping, the growth of irrigated areas fell behind that of population growth.



The world's population growth needs to be checked if essential resources are to be used effectively for future generations.

NEW SOURCES OF HELP?

Although there was little new land to plough from the mid-century onward, the world's farmers were able to achieve the largest expansion of food output in history by dramatically raising land productivity. The engine of growth was fertilizer use, which increased ninefold in three decades - from 14 million tonnes in 1950 to 126 million tonnes in 1984 - before starting to slow. In 1990, the rise in fertilizer use - what had been one of the most predictable trends in the world economy - came to a halt. In the former Soviet Union, fertilizer use actually dropped after 1988, as reforms moved fertilizer prices up to world market levels. More broadly, however, growth in world fertilizer use has slowed simply because existing grain varieties in the United States, Western Europe and Japan cannot use much more fertilizer economically.

The backing of unused agricultural technology that began to expand rapidly in the mid-19th Century now appears to be diminishing. Most of the known means of raising food output are already in wide use. The highest-yielding rice variety available to farmers in Asia in 1993 was released in 1966 - more than a quarter-century ago. Today, progressive farmers peer over the shoulders of agricultural scientists looking for new help in boosting production, only to find that not much is forthcoming.

GRASSLANDS USED OR OVERUSED

The growth in meat production, like that of grain, is slowing. Between 1950 and 1987, world meat production increased from 46 million tonnes to 161 million tonnes - boosting the amount per person from 18 kilograms in 1980 to 32 kilograms in 1987. Since then, however, it has not increased at all. Underlying this overall stagnation is a rather dramatic slowdown in the production of beef and mutton, resulting from the inability of grasslands to support more cattle and sheep. From 1950 to 1990, world beef output increased 2.5-fold. But from 1990 to 1992 - with grasslands almost fully used or overused on every continent - per

capita beef production for the world fell 6 percent.

EXHAUSTED OCEANS

The supply of fish, like that of meat, no longer keeps pace with increases in human numbers. Here, too, there has been a reversal of the historic trend. Between 1950 and 1989, the global catch expanded from 22 million tonnes to 100 million tonnes. Per capita seafood supply increased from 9 to 19 kilograms during this period. Since 1989, the catch has actually declined slightly, totalling an estimated 97 million tonnes in 1992. United Nations marine biologists believe that the oceans have reached their limit and may not be able to sustain a yield of more than 100 million tonnes per year. The world's ocean catch per capita declined 7 percent from 1989 until 1992 and is likely to continue declining if population continues to grow. As a result, seafood prices are rising steadily.



The spread of agriculture has come to an end.

Getting more animal protein, whether it be in the form of beef or farm-raised fish, now depends on feeding grain and soybean meal. Those wishing to maintain animal protein intake now compete with those trying to consume more grain directly.

DECLINING LIVING STANDARDS

Of all the new trends that have become apparent in the past few

NEW INITIATIVES

years, however, the upward shift in the population growth trends may be the most disturbing. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, declining fertility held out hope for breaking population growth before it began to undermine living standards. The 1980s, however, turned out to be a lost decade, one in which the United States not only abdicated its leadership role, but also withdrew financial support from the U.N. Population Fund and the International Planned Parenthood Federation. This deprived millions of couples in the Third World of access to the family planning services needed to control the number or timing of their children.

That population growth could undermine living standards has now become a matter of deepening concern. In early 1992, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of London together issued a report soberly warning that if current predictions of population growth prove accurate and patterns of human activity on the planet remain unchanged, science and technology may not be able to prevent either irreversible degradation of the environment or continued poverty for much of the world.

This article is adapted from the overview chapter of 'Vital Signs 1993: The Trends That Are Shaping Our Future' by Lester R. Brown, Hal Kane and Ed Ayres, published by W.W. Norton and the Worldwatch Institute, July 1993.