



SEPTEMBER 1995

Vol. 273



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:

Outings:

Subscriptions:

Rent :

Address:

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

CLUB OFFICER BEARERS 1995/96

President :	Kris Carnell	076 835 268
Vice-Presidents :	Rob McCosker	076 835 371
	Lincoln McPhee	076 811 651
Secretary :	Mary Walters	076 835 306
Treasurer :	Roger Logan	076 812 493
Newsletter Editor :	Desley McDonagh	076 813 074
Magazine Committee :	Julie Beddow & Wendy Donges	
Publicity Officer :	Patience James	076 811 853
Librarian :	Trish McCosker	076 835 371
Management Committee :	President, Vice- Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer.	

FOR YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE !!!

ADDRESS CORRECTION NOTICE

Please check your address. If it is not exactly as it should be, for your satisfaction, but more importantly, correct for Australia Post delivery - PLEASE ADVISE THE CLUB BY PHONE OR MAIL. Thanks !

CORRECTION TO PROGRAM

The program for the meeting for July 24th 1996 will be 'Remember Last Year' as that is the Annual General Meeting. Please make the alteration to your program so that you remember to take those slides for the program.

HALF DAY OUTING IN EARLY OCTOBER

There is to be a half day outing to the Junction at Girraween NP on October 8th. This is after the next meeting but well before the next newsletter will be out. This will be led by Brian Dodd, meeting at the picnic area at Girraween at 1.00pm. We expect that the Diabetic Support Group will join us for this outing.

CLASSIFIED ADS SECTION

For Sale :- Mountain Explorer Double Skin Four Person Tent
As New. 8' x 10' - \$100.00. Mary Walters 076 835 306

August Outing to the Aztec Temple, Girraween National Park

The warm weather made conditions very pleasant for the 40 people who attended the outing on 19th August. It was great to see some old faces along for the day as well as some new ones.

We parked on the Racecourse Creek Road a short distance from the turnoff and after a cuppa set off along the service track. A pardalote's nest entrance was seen in the bank beside the track and the nest of a yellow robin, which had two eggs on the preouting trip three weeks ago, was now abandoned. This track provides some great views of the Signboard or Elephant Rock and Mt Norman. At the track's highest point about half the group detoured to climb the rocky hill to the east. After some searching around we found a way for most to reach the top and were rewarded with views of all the prominent peaks of Girraween and Bald Rock.

From there we rejoined the road and walked to the Paling Yard Creek crossing, a natural rock ford where in this dry time the water disappeared underground, to re-appear some distance away. We had lunch at this spot, after getting the rest of the group back, since they had wandered a bit too far along the track.

The majority of people decided to tackle the more difficult walk through the bush to the Aztec Temple, while the rest returned to the cars on the track from the top of the Underground Creek. The bushfires of last September had cleared the undergrowth, making the going quite easy, and at the Racecourse Creek we crunched over the charcoal remains of coral fern *Gleichenia dicarpa* which would have been almost impenetrable before the fires. It was interesting to see the billabongs here, with the creek running some distance away.

The walk up the eastern side of the hill was a bit of an effort and people were happy to rest in the cool shade of the towering rock formations which make up the Aztec Temple. We walked on to the Underground Creek for a look at its amazing bit of rock sculpture, and another rest in the shade, (it was a pretty hot day after all!) before setting off back to the cars. The return track runs right underneath the Signboard and the lure for five people was too much, we climbed it as well, to be rewarded once again with splendid views.

Although the wildflower season was well under way we saw few on this trip because of the severe drought and fires. Hovea, Hardenbergia, Epacris, Leucopogon, Indigophera, Phebalium and of course Acacia were seen in bloom. Also of interest was the 'exfoliation' of the granite rocks from the heat of the fire, causing thin sheets of rock to flake off.

Rob McCosker

BIRDS - seen and/or heard

Sea Eagle	Spotted Pardalote	White Eared Honeyeater
Brown Owl	Whistler	Jenny Wren
Grey Fantail	Grey Butcher Bird	Leather head
Currawong	Kookaburra	Crow
Wood duck	Little Wattle Bird	

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC HELD IN
THE CWA ROOMS STANTHORPE ON 23RD AUGUST 1995.

Opening :- President Kris Carnell welcomed everyone present to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to new members Ron and Peggy Travis, Rudy & Doorne Nederkoom and to visitors Julie and Carol Rix and Sonya and Jarvis De Boer.

Attendance :- 27 present, 11 apologies as per attendance book.

Minutes :- The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record on the motion of Rod Hutchin, seconded by Lyle Thompson and carried.

Correspondence :- Inward :-

1. Chinchilla Field Naturalists 2. Directory of Australian Associations
3. Darling Downs Naturalist 4. Queensland Conservation Council 5. Dept of Environment, Sport & Racing 6. Qld Naturalist Club Inc (2 items) 7. Dept of Tourism & Sport 8. Landcare Information. 9. Aust Tours for Sport. 10. Footprint 11. Dept of Environment & Heritage (2 items) 12. Commonwealth Bank 13. Matrix Office systems 14. Office of Consumer Affairs Qld 15. Dept of Tourism, Sport Racing. 16. University of Southern Qld 17. Southern Downs Tourist Assn Inc.

Outward:-

1. Qld Herbarium 2. Directory of Australian Associations. 3. Patience James.

The inward correspondence was received and the outward adopted on the motion of Mary Walters, seconded by Val White and carried.

Finance

Roger Logan moved and Margaret Carnell seconded that the Financial Statement be adopted. Carried.

Balance as at 26/7/95	\$2884.51
Receipts	497.50
	\$4382.01
Expenditure	165.51
Balance as at 23/8/95	\$4216.50

General Business

1. The Flora of Girraween and Bald Rock National Parks - there are two copies of this book unsold.

2. Heritage Park. The topsoil has been laid and the program is proceeding well. Kris Carnell asked for able-bodied volunteers to dig holes on Sunday week.

3. Items for our monthly Newsletter. Desley McDonagh appealed to members to submit articles of interest.

4. Outing/ Meeting Program for 1995/6. Millie Marsden pointed out an error in the program. The program on the night of the AGM on 24/07/96 is always reserved for the presentation of slides on "Remember last year." As no one from the DPI has been approached, our usual program will be held.

5. Stanthorpe Shire Council New Town plan. Kris Carnell wished to remind members that the Council is in the process of advertising and publicising the New Town Plan. The plan is now in document form and is on display at the Council Chambers. Public meetings start on the 28th August at the Civic Centre at 5.30 pm, The Summit Hall on 29th August at 7.30 pm, Ballandean Hall on 31st August at 7.30pm, Greenlands School on 4th September at 7.30pm. Any person may make a written submission to the Chief Executive Officer regarding the proposed planning scheme. This is an opportunity to have input into the scheme before it is sent to the State Government for approval.

6. Next Outing. The next outing on the 24th September will be led by Ron & Nancy Gooding to Mt Colliery. We will meet in Warwick at the corner of Bracker Road and the New England Highway at 9.00am. Ray Marsden will guide us to the Gooding's property at Mt Colliery. The country is very dry, but the gorges are beautiful.
7. Outing Report. Roger Logan read the report on a most enjoyable outing to the Aztec Temple led by Rob McCosker on the 20th August 1995.
8. Half Day Outing. On the 8th October Brian Dodd will lead an outing to the Junction in Girraween National Park. We will meet at the Picnic Area at 1 pm. The Diabetic Support Group will be invited to join us.
9. Specimens. Rod Hutchin brought some fine specimens of orchids, also prints of our outing to the Aztec Temple. Lincoln McPhee brought a 'dumpling' found by Fred Simpson somewhere in Australia. Many thanks Rod and Lincoln.
10. Next meeting. At the next meeting on the 27th Sept. Ray and Millie Marsden will present a program on their outback tour in 1994.
11. Program. Errol and Annette Walker presented an introductory program with slides on Lord Howe Island. A tour from Sunday to Sunday is planned. The dates will be determined on a majority preference vote. This was followed by a Quiz, compiled by Mary Walters. Many thanks to Desley for helping with the presentation of the program, and to Frank Wilkinson for the tuneful ditty, and to everyone.

PRE-OUTING NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER OUTING TO MT COLLIERY

Nancy Gooding sends the following information about our visit to Mt Colliery.

'Our narrow valley in the foothills is about four miles north of Killarney, in the next valley, and about 36 km east of Warwick. Visible from our living room window is the gorge where Hurdle Creek rises, and in wet times, tumbles over 30-40m high falls, and rushes down its narrow bed to eventually join the Condamine, via Farm and Emu Creeks. Coal was mined for many years in these headwaters, and much evidence is still visible, though mining ceased many years ago. Tunnels radiated through the surrounding hills, and much slag remains around the creek. A slag heap caught fire 13 years ago and is still smouldering. The resulting chitters makes excellent gravel!

Timber getters were the first to arrive in the area. From high spot on the mountain, a shute was used to get logs to a lower level and from there, dragged by bullock team to a 'roll-over' into the creek valley. Some evidence of this still exists.

Access to the falls is too difficult as it runs into a steep gorge, but we can walk part way upstream at a comfortable grading, past the pit head, and then a more difficult walk to the 'roll-over'.

THE OUTING IS ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH. WE ARE TO MEET AT WEEROONA PARK AT 8.00 AM; AND WILL MEET UP WITH OTHERS AT THE CORNER OF BRAKER ROAD AND THE NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY, WARWICK AT 9.00 AM. RAY MARSDEN WILL LEAD US FROM THERE TO THE GOODING'S PROPERTY. LUNCH IS TO BE CARRIED. ANY FURTHER INFORMATION NEEDED - PLEASE CONTACT THE SECRETARY MARY WALTERS ON 076 835 306.

SATIN BOWER BIRDS - from Val White.

There have been Satin Bower Birds present in College Road ever since I moved into town 20 years ago - but this is the first year they have built a bower. It is about 30 yards from the back door, behind the bar-be-que area, just outside my boundary fence. I often watch the male bird 'chatting up the girls'. I wonder if their habitat has been destroyed?

QUIZ QUESTIONS

[These questions were prepared by Mary Walters for the Quiz at the August Nats meeting. The answers will be in the next magazine, always presuming that I remember to put them in !!!]

SET 1

1. A SCREE is a. a transparent curtain used in stage production.
b. an accumulation of stones on a hillside.
c. a prolonged speech or piece of writing.
2. What type of Australian animal is a PERENTIE?
3. What one word can follow each of these? earth, inch, ring, round, tape.
4. What aquatic plant is the floral emblem of India?
5. Europe's longest river, the Volga, flows into which sea?
6. An Avocet is a. a long legged wading bird
b. a guided missile weapon
c. a small badger-like mammal.
7. How many stars on the Australian flag?
8. What name is given to a place where two rivers meet, and to the body of water so formed?
9. What long-eared Australian marsupial is reproduced in chocolate form as an alternative to the chocolate Easter Bunny?
10. Of what is sung : I like it for tea. A little each day is a good recipe.

SET 2

1. The world's largest lizards, the KOMODO dragons are found on the islands belonging to what country?
2. The adjective VERNAL relates to which of the four seasons?
3. A PETROGLYPH is a. a prehistoric rock carving.
b. a glass dish in which bacteria are grown.
c. a map reference indicating the site of an oil well or rig.
4. What flower name can be preceded by the following - African, Livingstone, Marguerite, Paris and Shasta ?
5. What non-scientific name was given to the 3.18 million year old fossil of a female discovered in Ethiopia in 1974?
6. A WALER is what type of Australian animal?
7. Name the South China Sea Group, ownership of which is disputed by Brunei, China, Malaysia, Phillipines, Taiwan and Vietnam.
8. What is the name given to a ring like coral island enclosing a lagoon?
9. Name one of the five endangered creatures (not Australian) pictured on a series of stamps released in November 1994 by Australia Post.
10. A PANTHEON is a a. a temple dedicated to all the gods.
b. an ancient large-wheeled wagon.
c. the offspring of a lion and a panther.

SET 3

1. The River Thames runs into which body of water?
2. In June 1995 the launch of U.S.S Space Shuttle Discovery was postponed because of damage caused by which bird?
3. Jesus' birth is told in which book of the Bible?
4. What word is a pear shaped astringent fruit, a character in Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' and the Spanish word for 15?
5. Name the Australian mainland's most easterly point.
6. A MARTINGALE is a a. 19th Century woman's undergarment.
b. European songbird.
c. strap forming part of a horse's harness.
7. A one humped camel is a dromedary. What name is given to the two-humped species?
8. Callisto B, Europa, Ganymede and Io are the 4 main moons of which planet?
9. What is the unique characteristic of mammals called monotremes?
10. Hibernia was the Roman name for which country?



**BIRDS ON FARMS:
A New England Perspective**
by Geoff Barrett & Hugh Ford

Date: Sept 1993

Code: 93/5

• Greening Australia PO Box 1467 Armidale NSW 2350 PH 067 723248 Fax 067 714094 •

Today's farm manager must think big, think wide, think holistic. Increasingly farms are required to be both economically and biologically sustainable. Thankfully the two go hand in hand.

To maintain biological diversity means managing the land so that as much of our native flora and fauna as possible survives. It is becoming clear that sustainable agriculture is dependent upon there being a healthy native ecosystem throughout the agricultural landscape. A farm which has been managed in such a way as to encourage native birds and mammals is likely to have healthier pastures and trees. Nowhere is this better illustrated than the pastoral landscape on the New England Tablelands (north-eastern New South Wales), where eucalypt dieback is largely caused by leaf-eating insects. In areas where the native ecosystem is still intact dieback is less evident and there is good reason to suggest that this is because the native birds, mammals and predatory insects control the leaf-eating insects. Birds are good indicators of the health of native ecosystems. If your farm has a rich diversity of native birds present you can expect a diversity of other native wildlife, including mammals, reptiles and amphibians, to also be present.

So how do you increase or maintain species diversity on your property? It's simple; native fauna and flora are like us, they need food and water, a place to live and protection from predators. Most rural properties have some tree cover or are planting trees, with careful management these remnants can serve as refuges for a native ecosystem. The aim of this leaflet is to present guidelines for attracting woodland birds into remnant vegetation. These guidelines can be thought of as environmental building blocks. As each block is put in place the native ecosystem will begin to establish itself in even the most degraded of agricultural landscapes.

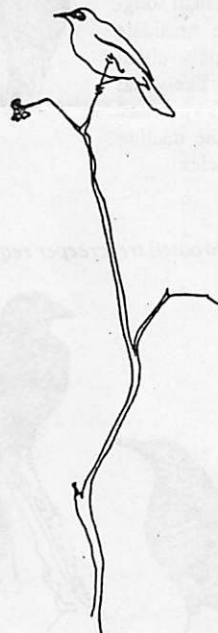
1) Corridors

Like us native animals need to move about the place. It may be that winter is coming on and they must travel to warmer places or simply that they must search for plants that flower and set fruit seasonally. Up to 40% of our woodland birds are migrants or partial migrants. As they move through the landscape, most woodland birds are vulnerable to aerial predators like goshawks and falcons, particularly when they are forced to cross open grassland. Linking woodland patches with strips of trees (such as windbreaks), provides corridors for the movement of birds and mammals. Ideally a wildlife corridor should be about 100 metres wide, however, even a continuous row of single trees is better than nothing. By planting native trees and shrubs, rather than introduced species, the corridor itself will provide habitat for native animals. Many insectivorous birds and mammals can be encouraged to colonise the rural landscape by connecting isolated patches to larger areas of woodland on neighbouring land such as state forests, travelling stock routes or national parks.

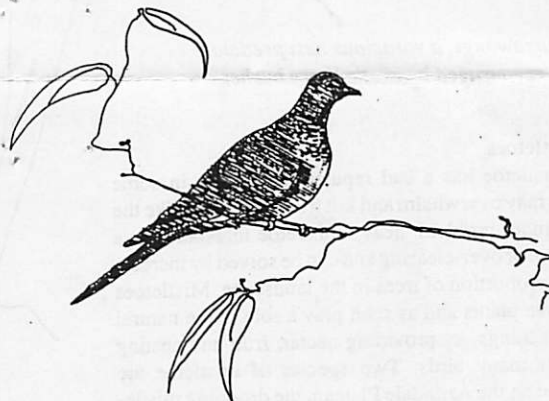
2) Woodland Patch Size,

Patch Isolation and Noisy Miners

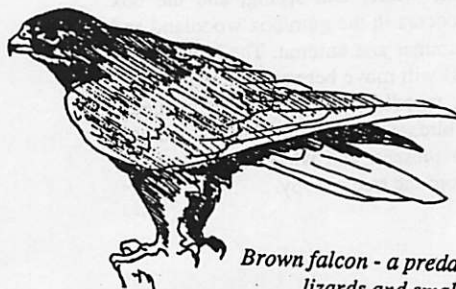
There are some species, like the peaceful dove, which are dependent on large tracts of undisturbed woodland (400ha), so state forests and national parks are vital to the survival of these species. The good news for farm managers is that the vast majority of woodland birds can exist in patches much smaller than this. A woodlot as small as 20ha can have a rich bird community, as long as it is not too isolated from other native vegetation (at least 30% woodland cover within 1km radius of patch). Smaller patches (5-10ha) can also have a rich bird community but only if there are few noisy miners in the area. Noisy miners are an aggressive, territorial species that will monopolise smaller, isolated woodlots and chase most other native birds out. Unfortunately they are common on the Armidale Plateau, being favoured by extensive clearing of woodland. It appears that once an area of woodland gets below 5ha, many bird and mammal species cannot survive, noisy miners can easily establish a territory, eucalypt dieback increases and the native ecosystem collapses. Predation of nests by birds such as the grey butcherbird and Australian magpie is higher in these smaller patches.



Noisy miners drive away many birds.



Peaceful dove requires large areas of woodland.



Brown falcon - a predator of insects, lizards and small birds.

3) Vegetation Diversity

Variety is not only the spice of life it is the elixir of life. A broad mixture of local, native tree and shrub species will ensure a variety of food sources throughout the year, as well as providing for birds that require specific vegetation types. At least 10 species of bird, such as the fuscous honeyeater, are more common in gum/box woodland than in stringybark woodland. Conversely, the white-throated treecreeper, along with 10-15 other species, is more likely to be found in the stringybark woodland. A farm which has both types of woodland will have a greater diversity of native birds. Introduced trees and shrubs such as hawthorn and pyracantha should be avoided, as not only do they provide very little habitat for native birds but they provide an unnatural winter food source for currawongs, which prey on the young of smaller birds. Nest success for small songbirds on the Armidale Plateau is only about 25% and it is likely that nest failure is a primary reason for the decline of many species.



White-throated treecreeper requires stringybarks



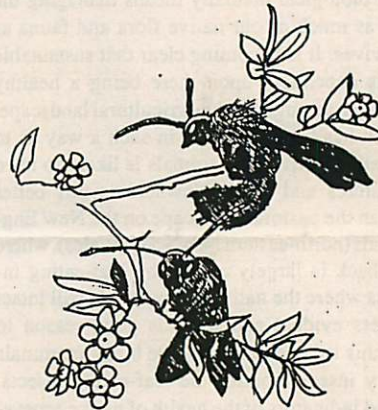
Currawongs, a voracious nest predator, encouraged by exotic berry bushes

4) Mistletoes

The mistletoe has a bad reputation because in some areas it may overwhelm and kill trees, however, like the noisy miner problem, heavy mistletoe infestation is a symptom of over-clearing and can be solved by increasing the proportion of trees in the landscape. Mistletoes are native plants and as such play a role in the natural order of things, by providing nectar, fruit and nesting sites for many birds. Two species of mistletoe are common on the Armidale Plateau, the drooping mistletoe which occurs in the stringybark woodland and flowers during the winter and spring, and the box mistletoe which occurs in the gum/box woodland and flowers during summer and autumn. The honeyeaters (about 10 species) will move between the stringybark and the gum/box woodland in response to mistletoe flowering. Many birds will be attracted to a woodlot if there is mistletoe present, and while there they will remove insects from the tree canopy.

5) Understorey Vegetation

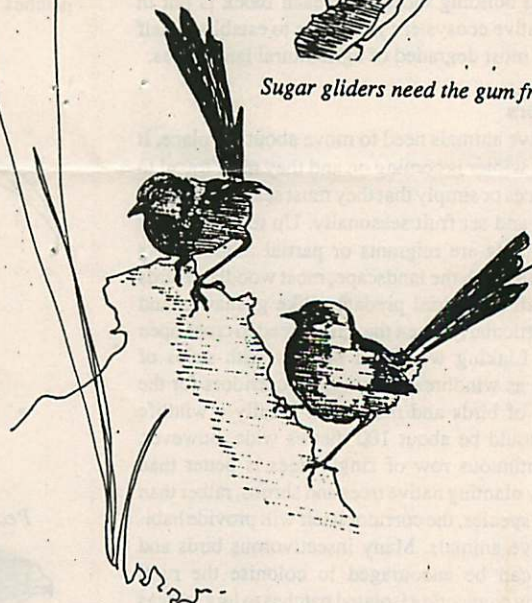
Small birds such as thornbills will forage for insects in cassinias, peach heaths and hickory wattles, honeyeaters will visit flowering banksias and correas, native wasps will take nectar and pollen from tea trees, sugar gliders will search for the gum of black wattles during the cold winter months. Understorey vegetation means habitat which means an increase in species diversity. Shrubs also provide physical protection from predators. This is particularly important during the nesting season when many small songbirds are looking for bushy thickets, of species such as blackthorn, in which to build their nests. Introduced shrubs and trees are better than nothing. However, it is worth remembering that if introduced species become more common throughout the landscape than native species most of our native fauna will disappear.



Scoliid wasps use nectar from tea trees and parasitize Christmas beetle larvae



Sugar gliders need the gum from wattle trees.



Blue wrens need shrubs for nesting