



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.

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.	

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. IF YOU HAVE A MAIL SERVICE OR A POST OFFICE BOX NUMBER THAT WE DON'T KNOW WE NEED IT!

IS THIS THE YEAR OF THE MAGPIE?

For the last few weeks our backyard has been frequented by magpies. It is nothing to see ten or more idly walking round pecking in the grass for their tit bits while more are perched in the trees and on the electricity poles waiting to descend. Continually through the day there is the melodious song alternating between ground and heights which is so delightful. Apparently they are all used to human company as you can walk quite close to them. They come even closer if you are digging in the garden so caution is required to avoid them in their eagerness to catch the grub or two you may uncover. To date they are still on friendly terms so maybe their nests are some distance away. Long may they stay!

Joan Stevenson.

A magpie story from the editor.

While I was living in Melbourne I had surgery on my left foot and was on crutches for several weeks. I had a number of magpies which spent quite a lot of time in the trees in my backyard. I had one very tall beautiful eucalypt. One morning one of these magpies sat on the back of my garden seat, just a short distance from my back door and sang and sang. It sat there for well over an hour singing most magnificently. I hopped outside the door, sat on a chair and drank in the beauty of that concert. Had I not been on crutches I would probably have been too busy to sit still and listen. I doubt if I will ever forget that experience. It was one of my very 'special' moments.

Desley



LORD HOWE ISLAND EXTENDED OUTING UPDATE

It was a rewarding response to our suggestion of an extended club outing to Lord Howe Island. As you probably know, an expression of interest coupon was sent or given to all Nats members with a choice of preferred dates. There was so much interest with a variety of preferred dates mainly due to school teacher obligations and seasonal considerations that decisions were made to arrange two trips.

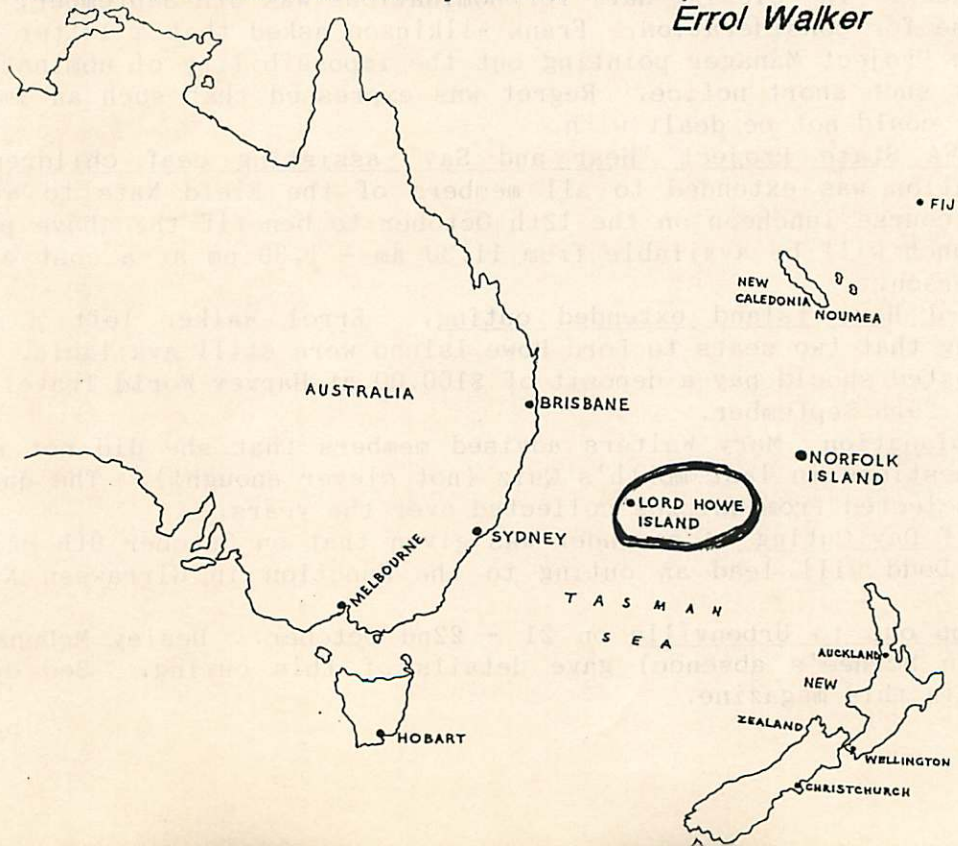
30 reservations have been secured (15 for each departure date) and at the time of writing (6/10/95) the Dec 3rd departure is a certainty with only a few seats remaining for the April 7th trip. Deposits for the April departure will be required very soon if you haven't been contacted yet.

For people requiring transport to and from Brisbane, to avoid bus fares and taxi fares at inconvenient times we have secured the services of a minibus. This bus will take us straight to the Brisbane Airport and be waiting to collect us on our return the following Sunday. Harvey World Travel, Stanthorpe, will be co-ordinating all aspects of our trip and should be contacted with any queries. 076 812 144 (Gerard or Debbie).

It is a wonderful destination and we can assure you that one week on the island will only whet your appetite for another. Annette and I will be happy to discuss any aspects of your holiday to Lord Howe to help you get the most out of your trip. 076 812 008.

Circumstances in the travel industry change from day to day so it is possible, even if you have not seriously considered joining the December trip till now, that a vacancy may exist even at this late date. (Talk to Gerard or Debbie at Harvey World Travel).

Errol Walker



MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC HELD IN
THE CWA ROOMS STANTHORPE ON 27TH SEPTEMBER 1995.

Opening :- President Kris Carnell being away on holiday, Vice President Rob McCosker welcomed everyone present to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to visitors Megan and Laura Marsden.

Attendance :- 19 present, 15 apologies as per attendance book.

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

Correspondence :- Inward :-

1. Dept of Environment, Sport & Territories 2. Toowoomba Field Naturalist Club Inc. 3. Patience James 4. Young Australia of the year Awards. 5. Canopy. 6. Matrix Office Systems 7. Footprint 8. Urimbirra 9. Bank Statement. 10. Dept of Consumer Affairs. 11. President, Members of the QCWA.

Outward:-

1. Community Billboards 2. Round the Ridges 3. Matrix Office Systems.

The inward correspondence was received and the outward adopted on the motion of Millie Marsden, seconded by Ron Travis. Carried.

Finance

Treasurer Roger Logan being away on holiday, Vice President presented the Financial Statement.

Balance as at 23/8/95	\$4215.50
Receipts	252.80
	\$4469.30
Expenditure	602.85
Balance as at 27/9/95	\$3866.45

Rob McCosker moved and Wendy Donges seconded that the Financial Statement be adopted. Carried.

General Business

1. Young Australian of the Year Awards. - A letter was received from the Project Manager asking for nominations for these awards. The letter was dated 29th August; received by the Secretary of our club on the 6th September. The closing date for nominations was 8th September, leaving no time for consideration. Frank Wilkinson asked that a letter be sent to the Project Manager pointing out the impossibility of nominating any one at such short notice. Regret was expressed that such an important matter could not be dealt with.

2. QCWA State Project "Hear and Say" assisting deaf children. An invitation was extended to all members of the Field Nats to attend a three course luncheon on the 12th October to benefit the above project. The lunch will be available from 11.30 am - 1.30 pm at a cost of \$7.00 per person.

3. Lord Howe Island extended outing. Errol Walker left a message stating that two seats to Lord Howe Island were still available. Anyone interested should pay a deposit of \$100.00 at Harvey World Travel before Friday 29th September.

4. Explanation Mary Walters advised members that she did not make up the questions in last month's Quiz (not clever enough!). The questions were selected from quizzes collected over the years.

5. Half Day Outing A reminder was given that on October 8th Brian and Noela Dodd will lead an outing to the Junction in Girraween National Park.

6. Camp out to Urbenville on 21 - 22nd October. Desley McDonagh (in Lincoln McPhee's absence) gave details of this outing. See detailed entry in this magazine.

7. Outing Report Rob McCosker gave a report on the outing on the 24th September. See detailed entry in this magazine.
8. Next meeting The program will be presented by John Sommerlad.
Subject : Aboriginal and white history of Bald Rock & Boonoo Boonoo National Parks.
9. Specimens. Dore McCosker brought a skull of a bird, thought to be that of a Tawny Frogmouth; Desley McDonagh had prints from the outing to Sundown.

Learning for pleasure :- Liaison Officer Mary Walters wished to thank the following members for their continued support in providing venues and great hospitality :- Frank & Ailsa Wilkinson Ancient History
Jean Chauvel Current affairs
Jocelyn Bonner French

Frank & Ailsa thank you also for providing the program for Ancient History in the absence of Gordon & Noor Davis.

Program Ray & Millie Marsden shared with us their exciting trip to the top end and to Broome. It seems that they enjoy themselves even when their car is out of action for quite some time. It was an excellent program - very good slides of exciting places. Thanks Ray & Millie.

OUTING NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER OUTING TO MT COLLIERY

(These notes from information given by Rob McCosker combined with comments made by members at the meeting.) The outing was cancelled on account of the weather. BUT - Four cars started off from Weeroona Park in the rain, and met up with a few more people in Warwick. (still raining). A total of 15 people decided to continue to Ron and Nancy Gooding's home for smoko and a yarn on their verandah. We enjoyed our smoko and Ron gave an interesting talk on the district. Ron & Nancy asked us to come again hopefully in better weather. Thank you both very much for your hospitality. In the Gooding's garden we saw a beautiful Iron bark in blossom. The wattle birds were enjoying its blossoms. On the way back Frank James saw a brown hawk splashing about in a puddle. We returned home travelling different interesting routes. A number of us finished off the afternoon with a slide show and afternoon tea at Ray & Millie Marsden's home. Thanks, Millie & Ray.

Q. WHAT DID ONE FEMALE MOSQUITO SAY TO ANOTHER FEMALE MOSQUITO?

A. "TM LOOKING FOR NEW BLOOD!"

PRE - OUTING NOTES FOR CAMP OUT OCTOBER 21/22
AT MR & MRS BOB CLARK'S
BEAURY CREEK PROPERTY VIA TOOLOOM
URBENVILLE NSW

Leader - Lincoln McPhee 076 811 651

"Levuka" is a picturesque camping area beneath red cedars on a creek near a heritage listed reserve.

Bush walk along old logging tracks through rainforest, past bush orchids, rockpools and waterfalls, along creek banks into open dry forests, or just relax in the warm sunshine at your campsite.

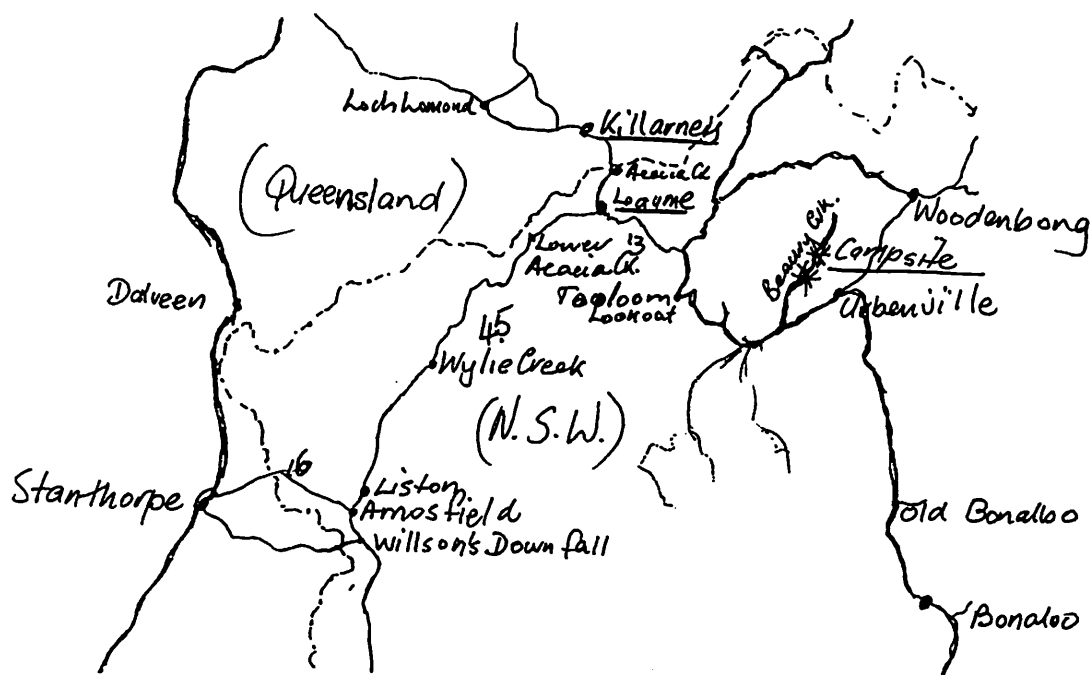
Driving time from Stanthorpe takes 1 and a half to two hours, via Liston, Mt Lindesay Road, Legume thence to Urbenville passing through Tooloom scrub continuing via Wallaby Creek, where wallabies abound, arriving Beaury Creek turnoff; then approximately 10 kilometres to campsite. **THE ROAD THROUGH WARWICK, KILLARNEY & LEGUME IS MUCH BETTER AND WE SUGGEST THAT YOU TAKE THAT.** It is suggested that you make your own way to the campsite in time to be ready for a guided walk into the heritage area leaving at 1.00pm. Saturday evening's program will be spotlighting. Within 20 minutes of the campsite there are flowers, trees, fungi, and a lookout overlooking Mt Barney, Mt Lindesay, Nightcap, Edinburgh Castle and the Obelisk.

Sunday morning program will be to explore the rainforest or Tooloom falls - leaving at approx. 9.00 am.

Prices per person per day.

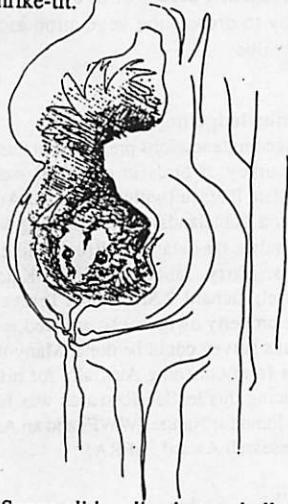
- * with use of facilities - \$7.00
- * without use of facilities - \$5.00
- * children under 6 - free
- * children primary school age - \$2.50
- * includes fishing and 4WD tracks

A RACQ Gold Coast/ Northern Rivers map may assist you to find your way.

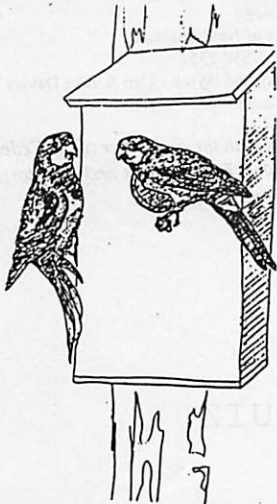


6) Old Trees

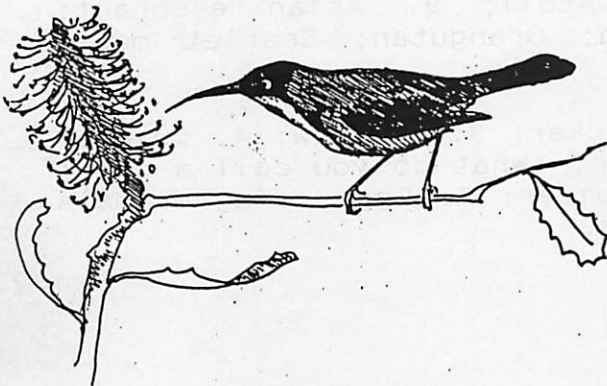
About one fifth of all native birds nest in tree hollows. Nearly a third of our mammals, particularly the possums, gliders and bats, are also dependent on living and dead trees which have nesting hollows. How many trees with nesting hollows do you have on your property? Count them; you may be surprised how few there are, particularly if your land is close to towns where people have been removing old, dead trees for fire-wood. It takes at least 80 years before a tree starts to produce suitable hollows, so these large 'habitat-trees' are an asset which should be treasured. If your farm lacks trees with natural hollows, nesting boxes can be used. Old trees also provide large areas of loose bark for insect-foraging birds such as the red-browed treecreeper and crested shrike-tit.



Sugar gliders live in tree hollows.



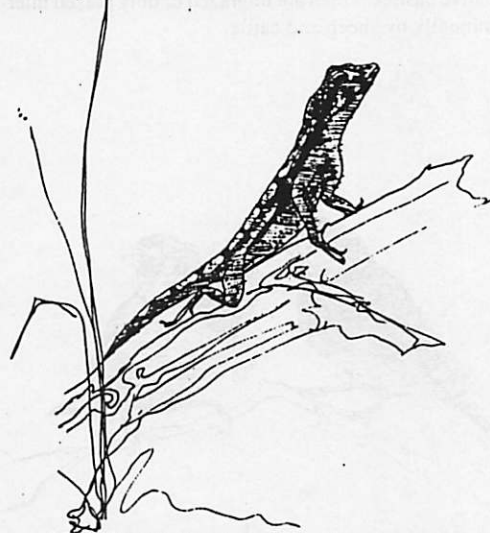
Artificial nesting boxes will attract many birds, like these eastern rosellas.



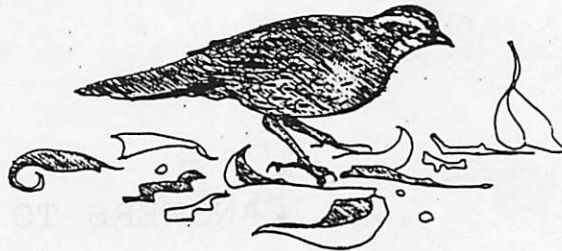
Eastern spinebills like banksias for nectar

7) Fallen Trees

We are conditioned to think that fallen trees should be 'cleaned up' and failure to do so is carelessness - far from it! The land-holder who cares about wildlife, will remember those days as a youngster when fallen trees and rock piles were a good place to search for native wildlife. As trees fall and decompose they protect regenerating trees and shrubs and allow the build up of leaf litter. Ground feeding birds (about 10 species) like the speckled warbler and spotted quail-thrush can be found sorting through the leaf litter in search of insects. One fifth of our native mammals, many reptiles, frogs and invertebrates are also dependent upon this rich soil ecosystem for food and habitat.



Many lizards like these jacky lizards need rotting logs to provide food and shelter.



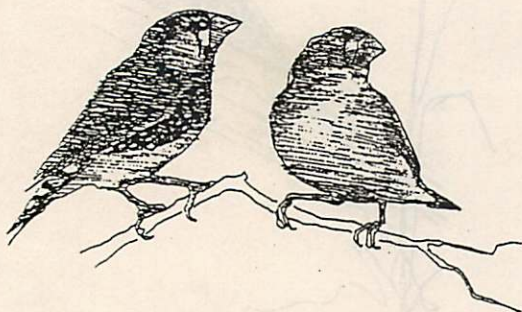
Spotted quail thrush needs leaf litter



Striated thornbill forages in cassinia

8) Herbs and Grasses

Finches like the diamond firetail and double-barred finch have declined in number. They are seed-eaters, dependent on native herbs and grasses. They also require dense understorey vegetation, preferably along waterways. As such they are in direct competition with grazing animals such as sheep and cattle which often concentrate their grazing activity near watering points. Limiting stock access to waterways and allowing areas of native pasture to generate seed is one solution. Native pigeons like the common bronzewing and peaceful dove are also threatened by overgrazing and pasture improvement. Like the finches, they require areas of native pasture which are ungrazed or only grazed intermittently by sheep and cattle.



Zebra finches eat grass seeds.

9) Creeks and Waterways

Creeks and rivers amble through the countryside indifferent to land status and property boundaries. Their source often derives from well wooded areas and if they are fringed by native vegetation, they will act as wildlife corridors from which land-holders can tap the native ecosystem. At least eight bird species are more common along creeklines within woodland patches. The red-browed firetail and white-browed scrub-wren occur almost exclusively along waterways, dependent on the cooler, moister habitat. Almost all birds like to bathe and drink, so a woodlot which has a permanent source of water within its boundary will have more birds. This is also true for mammals, reptiles and of course frogs. Restricting access of livestock to water sources is one way to protect the vegetation around dams and along streams.

Acknowledgements:

The recommendations presented in this leaflet are the result of a survey of birds in over 300 woodland sites on the Armidale Plateau (within 60km of Armidale, on the New England Tablelands). The following people helped collect and analyse the data: Bob, Bruce, Clive, Charles, 2 Daves, 3 Geoffs, Harry, Janeen, 3 Kims, Kate, Liz, Lynda, Nic, Michael, Richard, 2 Stuarts and Teresa. A special thank you to the property owners who allowed access to their land so that this survey could be done. Many thanks also to David Curtis from Greening Australia for his help and advice in producing this leaflet. Research was funded by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and an Australian Postgraduate Research Award (APRA)

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ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

Set 1 : 1. b; 2. The largest goanna; 3. Worm; 4. Lotus; 5. Caspian; 6. a; 7. 6; 8. Con-fluence; 9. Bilby; 10. Aeroplane Jelly.

Set 2 : 1. Indonesia; 2. Spring; 3. a; 4. Daisy; 5. Lucy; 6. Horse; 7. Spratleys; 8. Atoll; 9. Asian elephant; Cheetah; Fijian crested iguana; Orangutan; Scarlet macaw
10. a.

Set 3 : 1. North sea; 2. Woodpecker; 3. Matthew; 4. Quince; 5. Cape Byron; 6. c; 7. Bactrian; (What do you call a camel with 3 humps? Humphrey) 8. Jupiter; 9. Egg laying mammals - platypus, echidna; 10. Ireland.