



JULY 1997

Vol 291



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 OFFICE BEARERS 1996/97

President :	Kris Carnell	076 835 268
Vice-Presidents :	Rob McCosker	076 835 371
	Lincoln McPhee	076 811 651
Secretary :	Liz Bourne	076 836 374
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 and advise of any change needed.

COMING UP

1. NEXT MEETING will be held on Wednesday, July 23rd at the CWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe at 8.00 pm. The programme will be presented by Brian and Noela Dodd who will be taking us from Kununurra to Kalbarri in Western Australia.

2. JULY OUTING - Sunday 20th July - to Doctor's Creek Falls and Girraween area at Brian McDonagh's property at Lyra. Leaving Weeroona Park at 9.00am. Further details inside.

PLEASE NOTE

1. DEADLINE DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER - Tuesday August 12th. Contributions are welcome - send them to me at 4 Pierpoint Street, Stanthorpe, 4380.

2. Please remember that, when the club is travelling as a convoy, (particularly in unfamiliar territory), each driver is expected to make sure that the next car is in sight.

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.

QUIZ QUESTIONS - NATS MEETING 25/06/97.

(These questions were asked at the June meeting. There are a series of questions in sets of three. The first question has one answer, the second two and the third three, with the exception of the final question which asks you to list the floral emblems of the Australian States and Territories. The answers will be in the August newsletter, provided the editor remembers.)

1. What is the origin of the word 'rosella' for the species of parrot?
2. Name two monotremes.
3. 3 species of banksia.

1. To which family does mallee belong?
2. 2 sea or coastal birds.
3. 3 honeyeaters.

1. The only Australian Stork is called the -----
2. 2 species of acacia confined to this area.
3. 3 birds of prey.

1. Another name for native tiger cat.
2. The two kookaburras are -----
3. 3 kingfishers.

1. Common name for the brachychiton family.
2. 2 butcher birds.
3. 3 native fish found in inland waters.

1. Common acacia grown almost everywhere named for a NSW town.
2. 2 oyster catchers.
3. 3 hopping marsupials.

1. Family name for the smooth barked apple.
2. 2 large flightless native Australian birds.
3. 3 nocturnal birds.

1. Another name for the lotus bird.
2. 2 nocturnal animals.
3. 3 introduced animals that have become feral.

1. Large water bird, found worldwide, with very big bill.
2. 2 common names for hardenbergia.
3. 3 birds that are black and white.

1. The most dangerous Australian snake.
2. 2 feral introduced birds.
3. 3 National parks in this area.

1. Marsupial that lives on Rottnest Island off W.A.
2. 2 wild dogs - not necessarily Australian.
3. 3 bears. Excluding Humphrey, Pooh, Paddington and Rupert.

1. New Zealand flightless bird.
2. 2 species of fairy wren.
3. 3 native birds that can be pests in the fruit industry.

Floral emblems of Queensland; New South Wales; Victoria; South Australia; Tasmania; Northern Territory; Western Australia; Australian Capital Territory.

REPORT FOR EXTRA JUNE OUTING - SUNDAY 22ND.

The weather looked threatening as a small group of Nats set out for the June 'extra' outing. Eleven members travelled to Tenterfield to see if any of our southern members would be joining us. Helen Hartman met us at the weather rock and made arrangements about the August outing, but was unable to join us for the rest of the day owing to a prior commitment.

WE set off then for that most important event - morning tea - this time at Thunderbolt's hideout. This stop turned out to be the highlight of the day. After our cuppa we walked across the gully to the rocks to be greeted by the call of lyre birds. After listening for a while and trying to identify the different calls we walked up to a higher vantage point. The first three of us up on the rock were able to see two lyrebirds about 30 metres away. By the time the whole group reached the rock the birds had moved a short distance away but were still visible scratching under the bracken. We stayed for some time watching and listening to the numerous calls. There were either three or four birds close to where we were and we were rewarded with a brief glimpse of one bird displaying his tail feathers. Robin decided to try for a closer look but I think it was quite obvious that the birds knew exactly where we all were and wouldn't co-operate. The comment was made that the weather at the time, overcast, damp with low cloud, was probably just right for lyre birds.

Our next stop was the Timbarra Trig. All except two climbed the ladder to see the view and feel the cold. The area around the trig is showing the effect of the severe fire with very little to see in the way of plants etc. We then set off to Wellington Rock. The road to the rock has been up-graded and was no trouble for the Commodore. The last half of the access road has been changed and ends about 150m south east of the old stopping point.

It was very disappointing to see the unfinished shelter shed and toilet. All it would take to finish off the area would be a couple of day's work for a small gang. The timber and colorbond has obviously been lying there for many months and is in danger of being permanently damaged. If members wish to go there the toilet is usable and there are tables and bar-b-que areas.

After lunch we walked along the new track around the south-west side of the rock - quite easy walking. The new members were shown the areas where, in the past, braver members have climbed. The rocks were too slippery to do any climbing on this day. A track has also been made across to little Wellington Rock and on the way over we saw a waterfall in the eastern gully on an unknown creek. When we got to the vantage point we saw another waterfall on the Cataract River or its tributary.

As there were some members who had not been to Basket Swamp we adjourned there for another cuppa. We then returned to Stanthorpe via Wilson's Downfall arriving in Stanthorpe about 4.00pm. A good time was had by all.

Kris Carnell.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBERS - RECEIVED WITH THANKS

Are there Water 'rats' in Australia? Perhaps one of the Field Nats can give me some advice. - from Audrey Ridge.

A few days ago (the end of June) I was walking beside Quart Pot Creek and approaching the railway Street bridge, when I saw something swimming downstream in the middle of the creek. Only the tip of a nose was visible, and I was intrigued to know what it could be at this time of year, so I stood and watched. It appeared to be making for the bank under the bridge, so I quickly went to the far side of the bridge and waited, and was rewarded by seeing the head and shoulders of a rat emerge from the water. It must have seen me, because it immediately went back into the water and swam across the creek to the far bank, doing three or four somersaults in the water as it approached the bank. Then it came out of the water and proceeded to shake and then groom itself in the sun. Instead of the grey, soggy, bedraggled animal I expected to see, its fur was a rich golden brown in colour, sleek and glossy, with darker brown colour on the head and back of the neck, and its tail, though rat-like was white for the end four or five inches. As it was on the far side of the creek, I could not see any more detail, but it was about the size and shape of a large rat.

Has anyone any suggestions? Someone's escaped pet perhaps, but certainly not the common rat, I'm sure.

FROM Tom and Irene Chapman

How observant are you with birds that you know?

During a recent visit to Southern Gippsland in Victoria we had a very salutary lesson in jumping to conclusions.

We were staying in a cottage beautifully positioned overlooking Waratah Bay with Wilsons Prom in the background. Not only was it an idyllic place but large numbers of rosellas came in to be fed, sitting on heads, shoulders and hands.

There were Crimson Rosellas, mature males and females plus many immatures. Amongst them was one different bird that we immediately knew was an eastern Rosella. He was slightly smaller with red head and breast while the overall appearance of nape, back and wings was a blend of black, yellow and green.

No need to consult reference books to identify that one as it was a bird we knew well and it just could not be anything else. We went on feeding the rosellas including the one eastern which we observed closely and didn't at any time query its identity.

But when Scott, our 21 year old grandson who does much more surfing than bird watching saw it he immediately said "But the eastern rosella has a white cheek patch." Our bird had a very distinct blue patch but in all other ways had the eastern rosella marking. Once pointed out the blue cheek patch of the crimson rosella was so conspicuous on our bird that we couldn't notice anything else. Presumably it was a hybrid between the crimson and eastern rosella, the only really visible variation from the eastern being the blue cheek patch.

One other interesting thing about it was that although considerably smaller it was "boss of the flock." Probably an example of hybrid vigour that cattle breeders strive for in their cross breeding programmes.

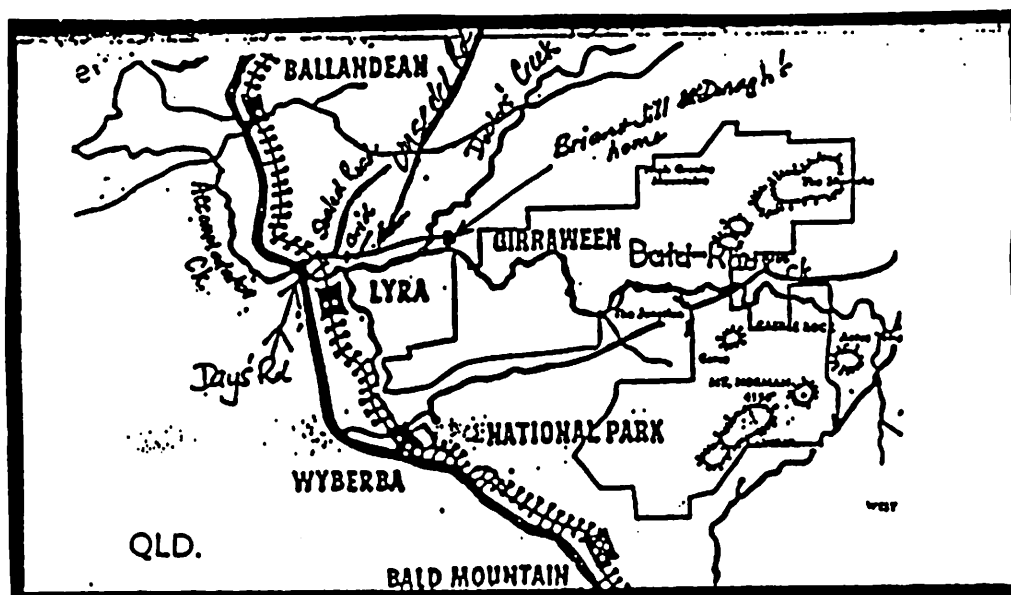
I wonder how many of you could honestly say that you would have known immediately that the cheek patch was wrong? We didn't!! Scott did and we were most impressed.

Now of course every time we see an eastern rosella the most conspicuous thing is the white cheek patch. Just like a great white flag.

(Many thanks to Audrey and Tom and Irene for these interesting contributions.)

Leaving Weeroona Park at 9.00 am, travel south on New England Highway - through Ballandean; south of Ballandean turn left into Day's Road just before Accommodation Creek bridge. After driving under the railway bridge veer right into unsealed road, then over grid. Stay on this unsealed road (DO NOT TURN OFF IT), till you come to Brian & Jill McDonagh's home - at the end of the road. (You cross several more grids).

Brian will be leading us up to the falls on Doctor's Creek, then up on to the bluff from that side. Carry lunch and WATER. There will be other activities for those who don't want to go up on to the bluff - it's a very interesting area of the district.



OUTING REPORT -CAMPOUT 7/8/9 JUNE 1997

Five intrepid souls ventured further than ever before to a beautiful place called Corindi Beach NSW.

Fishing and bushwalking was the order of the day. Enough fish for two meals were caught in a couple of hours. (Fish list - whiting, flathead, bream, long-tom). Same place - one fishing expedition.

The bushwalk was most interesting, a lagoon area, sand-dunes, across a creek to a headland. The striated or mangrove heron stood on a rock till we got very close to it. We went along Pebbly Beach, a beach strewn with many millions of tiny pebbles crunching underfoot. After recent high tides sea shells were in abundance in a secluded area. Many beautiful sea shells were observed. (For the first time for many years I found quite a few perfect cowry shells. Ed). Birds were plentiful around the swamp area and camping area. One wattle bird reminded us each morning and evening that the tree over our tents belonged to him! The coastal banksia was flowering in profusion. Some banksia flowers were 25-30 cms in length. (TRUE! not a fishing story. Editor). We watched one black snake, close to 2 metres long, slither across the track we'd not long walked on ourselves! We let it go on its own merry way.

The weather remained perfect for the whole time enabling us to journey inland to a lookout called Bruxner Lookout from which we could see a vast area of the colourful coastline north and south of Coff's Harbour.

Some of the group enjoyed the area so much that they stayed for a few more days. (We explored Red Rock, Coff's Harbour, Sawtell and Woolgoolga and even saw - way out to sea - several whales one day. The Editor, one who stayed.) Many thanks for the wonderful time - Lincoln McPhee.

Thanks to Lincoln for his efforts in planning the camp-out, and leading the walks in so many beautiful places. Those who went had a very enjoyable time.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.
held in Q.C.W.A. Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on 25 June, 1997

Opening: The meeting opened at 8.05pm with President, Kris Carnell, welcoming members and visitors, Vern and Kath Sullivan.

Attendance: There were 12 present and 8 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 May, 1997 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Patience James, seconded by Roger Logan. Carried.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

1. Toowoomba Bushwalkers - *Footprint* - June 1997
2. Australian Naturalist Expedition Society - request to advertise in magazine
3. Hollygreen Pty Ltd - offer to provide custom design ties and scarves

Outwards:

1. Notice of meeting and outing to *Round the Ridges* and *Community Billboard*.

This correspondence was received on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Neil Donges. Carried.

Financial Statement for the period 28/5/97 to 25/6/97

Balance as at 28/5/97 \$827.06

Receipts:	Room rent collection	\$ 6.60	
	Bank interest	<u>\$11.74</u>	
		<u>\$18.34</u>	<u>\$845.40</u>

Expenditure:

Room rent (May)	\$12.50	
Magazine postage (May)	\$37.25	
Stationary	\$56.20	
P/copier toner postage	\$ 3.60	
State Govt. tax (May)	\$ 0.90	
State Govt. tax (June)	<u>\$ 0.60</u>	
	<u>111.05</u>	<u>\$111.05</u>

Balance as at 25/6/97 is \$734.35

Accounts for Payment:

Room rent for June	\$12.50
Magazine postage for June	\$34.90
Extension cord for projector	\$13.95

The financial statement was adopted on the motion of Roger Logan, seconded by Rob McCosker. Carried.

Outing Report:

Kris Carnell spoke about the trip to Wellington Rock, north east of Tenterfield, that he led on Sunday 22 June. Eleven people attended and after a brief stop at Tenterfield, a morning tea stop was had at Thunderbolt's Hideout beside the Mt Lindesay Highway. The group was fortunate enough to be able to see a number of lyrebirds here. A diversion in to the Timbarra Trig in the Boonoo State Forest gave those brave enough to climb the boulder a good view of the surrounding countryside. Lunch was had at the small picnic area at the foot of Wellington Rock and then the group enjoyed an energetic scramble amongst the boulders.

Lincoln McPhee reported on his trip to Corindi Beach, south east of Grafton in northern NSW over the Queen's Birthday weekend from 7 - 9 June. Although only a few people attended, those that went had a very enjoyable time and even managed to catch some fish.

Next Outing:

Desley McDonagh outlined the proposed trip to Doctor's Creek Falls being led by her brother, Brian, on 20 July.

Next Meeting:

There will be a presentation by Brian and Nola Dodd on a trip they made from Kunnanurra to Kalbari.

Specimens:

1. Desley had prints from the campout and the trip to Billygoat Hill and photos from the previous trip to Wellington Rock.

General Business:

1. The Annual General Meeting will be held on 27 August. Kris reminded members that nominations for Committee positions should be considered and mentioned that a replacement for the position of magazine editor would be needed as Desley did not want to continue with this.

2. Kris said that he would be absent from the meetings and outings over the next three months as he and Margaret would be travelling around Queensland.

3. A questionnaire would be distributed with the next newsletter seeking member's views and suggestions for next year's program of outings and meetings.

4. Liz Bourne mentioned that a public meeting to discuss the draft Catchment Strategy for the Border Rivers would be held in Stanthorpe the following evening, 26 June at the Vines Motel starting at 7.30pm.

Program:

Desley conducted a very enjoyable and educational quiz based on natural history questions.

DRAFT CATCHMENT PLAN FOR THE BORDER RIVERS RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

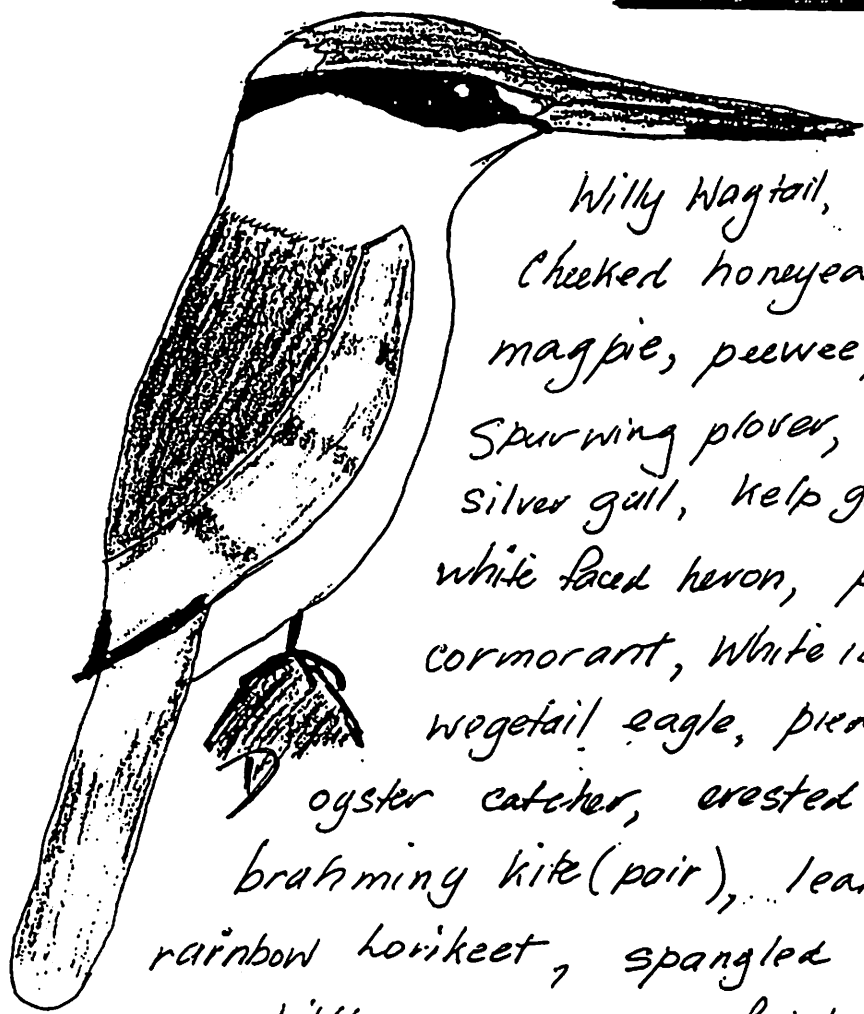
The Border Rivers Catchment Co-ordination Committee has released a draft plan for the Border Rivers catchment which aims to encourage greater co-ordination in and the sustainable management of the catchment's natural resources. The catchment encompasses Stanthorpe, Inglewood, Goondiwindi and Waggamba Shire and parts of Balonne, Waroo, Tara and Millmerran Shires and ranges from Stanthorpe in the east, Moonie to the north and Mungindi in the west.

The plan is designed to address the interrelated land, water and vegetation resource issues found within the catchment including land management, habitat and nature conservation, water management, riverine management, tourism and recreation, economic sustainability and cross border co-ordination.

Public comment on the draft plan is being encouraged and a series of public meetings were held throughout the catchment during June to gain further feedback from the community. Anyone wishing to have a look at the plan or interested in making comment on it, may obtain a copy by contacting me on 83 6374.

Liz Bourne

Bird list - June Camp-out



Yellow-tailed black cockatoo, Willy Wagtail, Blue faced honeyeater, white-cheeked honeyeater, lewin's honeyeater, magpie, peewee, black faced cuckoo-shrike, Spurring plover, little tern, common tern, silver gull, kelp gull, *Striated (mangrove) heron, white faced heron, pied cormorant, little pied cormorant, White ibis, straw necked ibis, wegetail eagle, pied oystercatcher, sooty oyster catcher, crested pigeon, peace luv dove, brahming kite (pair), leatherhead, little wattie bird, rainbow lorikeet, spangled drongo, red-backed wren, crow, little crow, grey fantail, silvereye, red-browed finch, noisy miner, grey butcher bird, pied butcher bird, ? fruit dove, brown thornbill, *immature cuckoo (? blackeared), white bellied sea eagle, brown falcon, Richard's pipit, laughing kookaburra, *collared (mangrove) kingfisher, wandering tattler (sandpiper), wood duck, striated pardalote.

* = first sighting for me.

Note:- Annual Meeting - August 27, 8pm.
Supper after meeting - bring something for supper. Programme - Remember Last Year.
Please bring slides & prints.
Election of Officers for 1997/8.