

NOVEMBER
Vol 295



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 1997 - 98

President	Kris Carnell	076 835268
Vice-Presidents	Roger Logan	076 812493
	Lincoln McPhee	076 811651
Secretary	Liz Bourne	076 836374
Treasurer	Julia Brown	076 814540
Newsletter Editor	Robin McCosker	076 835371
Magazine Committee	Wendy & Neil Donges, Julie Beddow	
Publicity Officer	Patience James	076 811853
Librarian	Trish McCosker	076 835371
Management Committee	President , Vice-Presidents , Secretary , Treasurer	

COMING UP

Next Outing West Bald Rock, Girraween, November 23rd , Leader Geoff Walker, meet at the Lions Park, Wallangarra at 8.30am.

Next Meeting General First Aid with Vic Torrens from the Stanthorpe Ambulance, Wednesday 26th October, at the QCWA Rooms Stanthorpe.

Christmas Break-up December 7th at Heritage Park, Granite St., Stanthorpe meeting at 4.00pm, for a stroll to the Little Red Bridge, or a swim, followed by BBQ Dinner.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER - 10th FEB 1998

Send contributions to The Newsletter Editor, P O Box 24, Severnlea Q4352 or leave with Mrs Dore McCosker, 58 Railway St., Stanthorpe.

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 sections common, with steps.
- 7 Cross country, some hills, some thick undergrowth.
- 8 Cross country, steep sections with scrambles over rocks etc., and 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.



MINUTES OF MEETING OF STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB INC.
held in Q.C.W.A. Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on 22 October, 1997.

Opening: The meeting opened at 8.05pm with President, Kris Carnell, welcoming members and visitors, Maureen and Alan Smith from Gawler in South Australia and Lou and M.E. Moss.

Attendance: There were 30 present and 8 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 24th September, 1997 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Rod Hutchin, seconded by Roger Logan. Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

Roger Logan reported that he had checked with Matrix Office Systems about their last bill which seemed very high and they agreed that they had made an error which they would rectify.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

1. Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club - *Darling Downs Naturalist* - Sept. 97
2. Toowoomba Bushwalkers Club - *Footprint* - Oct. 97
3. Matrix Office Systems - invoice for \$50
4. Aust. Consumers Association - offering subscription to *Choice* magazine
5. Dept. of Environment - announcing grants to conservation organisations
6. Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo - invitation to Expo in Melbourne in Feb. 98

Outwards:

1. Community service announcements for outing and meeting
2. Letter to Border Rivers Catchment Management Association nominating Liz Bourne to Committee

This correspondence was received on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Kath Sullivan. Carried.

Business Arising from the Correspondence:

Due to the very short time available in which to prepare and submit a funding proposal to the Department of Environment (only 3 weeks), Kris suggested that the Executive would discuss suitable projects early in the New Year and prepare a submission well in advance of grant applications being called for later in the year.

Financial Statement for the period 24/9/97 to 22/10/97

Balance as at 24/9/97 \$984.10

Receipts:	Subscriptions	99.00	
	Room rent collection	12.60	
	Room rent donation	<u>10.00</u>	
		<u>121.60</u>	<u>1,105.70</u>

Expenditure:	Room rent (Sept)	12.50	
	Magazine postage Sep	33.10	
	Magazine postage Oct	38.15	
	State Govt tax (Oct)	<u>1.60</u>	
		<u>85.35</u>	<u>(85.35)</u>
			<u>\$1020.35</u>

Balance as at 22/10/97 is \$1,020.35

Accounts for payment:

Matrix Office Systems 50.00

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

Outing Report:

In the absence of Peter Kerr, Roger Logan reported on a successful, if somewhat wet, campout to the Goomburra Forest Park the previous weekend which attracted 13 people, including some newcomers. In view of the weather, some went home early on Sunday but Vern and Kath Sullivan reported on a very enjoyable ridge walk they had with Peter that morning. The meeting thanked Peter for his efforts in organising the outing.

Next Outing:

Geoff Walker outlined his proposed trip to West Bald Rock on the 23rd November. It is proposed to meet at Lions Park Wallangarra before travelling to the Mt Norman day use area for smoko and then lunch will be carried on the trip up West Bald Rock.

Specimens:

1. Kris Carnell had some flowers from a native cassia *Senna odonata* which he has growing in his garden. Tom Dunn and Tom Archer also apparently have them growing in their gardens.
2. Kris showed members a booklet "*Camping in Queensland*" which he said was an excellent guide for their recent trip as it detailed information about camping sites in all the national parks and State Forests.
3. Jean Harslett had some details about the plants seen on the Amiens outing.
4. Mario Pennisi had a pamphlet on the proposed expansion of gold mining at Poverty Point, near the Timbarra River, east of Tenterfield.

General Business:

1. Errol Walker outlined a proposed trip he is planning to Vanuatu either next Easter or September and invited members to contact him if they were interested in coming along. The approximate cost is \$1,100.
2. Kris said next year's program of outings and meetings was being finalised and would be published in the next newsletter.
3. Peter Andrewartha said they would be undertaking a trip in April/May 98 to Mt Moffat, Salvatore Rosa and Carnarvon National Parks in central Queensland if anyone was interested in coming along but they would need a 4WD for some sections.

Peter and Jeanette Andrewartha then presented a slide program of areas in Central Australia.

Next meeting:

Vic Torrens from the Stanthorpe Ambulance will be presenting a general session on first aid and then is happy to answer members' questions.

NOVEMBER 23rd PRE-OUTING REPORT Leader:- Geoff Walker Ph: 81 2117

WEST BALD ROCK

The November outing is to West Bald Rock which is rated 6 - 7 in difficulty. Lunch, water etc is to be carried on the walk.

We will meet at the Lions Park in Wallangarra at 8.30am and from there drive to the granite gateway that is on the road to the Mt Norman day use area. After morning tea at this gateway we will start the walk to West Bald Rock stopping at the abandoned stone house and then following a National Parks fire maintenance trail to the start of the climb up a ridge that affords good views into the valley below and across to Mt Norman and other landmarks.

Walking times on the pre-outing were 20 minutes to the stone house and a 2 hour walk from there to the summit of West Bald Rock. These times will be longer with a larger group of people.

Geoff Walker

Outing Report 18-19 October 1997 Goomburra Campout

Those people who were able to get there on Friday, had the best of the weather. Saturday morning's sunlight became hidden by clouds, and the mossies arrived for afternoon snacks. Nevertheless, five people made it part way up the aptly named Cascades Creek, to a couple of small rock pools that would be very tempting on a hotter day: others dropping out along the way, as they desired. Saturday night saw 20 campers gathered around the fire after tea, confusing the marshmallow chefs with lots of advice? Millie's well-practiced production of another damper from a hotter than ideal fire, was in time to counter the arrival of a cool change, and coincided with the visit of a pair of possums. (Coincidence, or long memories?)

Sunday's dawn chorus replaced the roar of wind in the trees, but with cool, cloudy conditions, and the promise of showers from the east, only three set out for the Cascades-Ridge walk. A few misty showers did eventuate, but not until we were in the shelter of the rainforest canopy, where they enhanced the beauty and mystery of the forest giants and varied lower stories. From the more open schlerophyll ridge, the neighbouring ridges were blanketed in cloud, and the steep descent to camp was completed just as the rain started.

Thanks to Desley and Millie for the species lists, and to everyone for a relaxed weekend.

BIRD LIST - CAMPOUT GOOMBURRA FOREST PARK

White faced herons	Currawongs
Willy wagtail	White cockatoos
Crimson rosellas	Magpies
Satin bower birds (males, females and immature males)	
Crows	Eastern whipbird
Kookaburras	Eastern spinebills
Superb blue wrens (male and female)	Noisy miners
Tree creeper (heard)	Bell miners (heard)
White browed scrub wrens *	Black faced monarchs
Galahs	Wattlebirds
Rufous fantail	Grey fantail
Chestnut rumped heathwren *	Grey butcherbird
Red browed finches	

One immature male Satin bower bird was in the process of changing from green to dark blue - a really strange sight - with bits of green and dark blue in a mottled pattern.

Other observations included horses, a hare, possums, cattle and on a beautifully clear Friday night - satellites.

Plants noted include buttercups, wonga vine, violets, brachycome, maiden hair, glycine, hardenbergia and king orchids.

N.B. If the listing is singular we saw only one, and the * indicates a first sighting for me.

Desley McDonagh

Bird Watching with Mollie Stratton

Mollie has a wide variety of beautiful trees on her property and they provide a haven for birds.

Over many years successive generations of a family of Butcher birds and a family of Striated honeyeaters have formed a close bond, and are never far apart.

This year they have nested in the same pepperina tree - the exquisite nest of the honeyeater hanging from a lower branch and above, in a fork of the tree, the somewhat untidy nest of the Butcher bird.

Anyone passing by will be warned by the butcher bird flying overhead complaining loudly, followed closely by the honeyeater. They have then been seen to perch together on the top of the flagpole - a small precarious perch but an excellent observation post !

Mary Walters

There are Water-rats in Australia

What's more some of them are living in Quart Pot Creek !

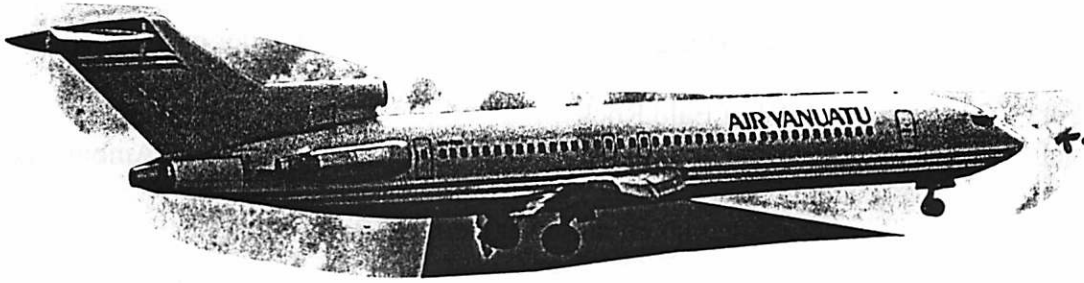
Audrey Ridge recently wrote to the Queensland Museum asking for help identifying the rat-like animal she had seen swimming in the creek, and according to Dr Steve Van Dyck, the Curator of Vertebrates, she had given him " a perfect description of a Water-rat, *Hydromys chrysogaster* ". Audrey has seen the Water-rats on several occasions, and in several different locations on the creek this winter. Below is some of the information received from the Museum.

This species is restricted to Australia, New Guinea and adjacent islands and is unrelated to the Water Vole of Europe. Among its adaptations for aquatic life are broad, partially webbed hindfeet and waterproof fur. The Water-rat usually lives in the vicinity of permanent bodies of fresh or brackish water and on some marine beaches. Nests are made at the end of tunnels in banks or occasionally in logs. It can climb hollow trees in search of prey, but is slightly clumsy on land and takes most of its food from the water, searching among vegetation along the shoreline and around submerged roots and sunken logs. It eats little plant material, being essentially an opportunistic predator on large aquatic insects, fishes, crustaceans and mussels. Frogs, lizards, small mammals, fresh carrion and water birds may also be taken, and is often carried to a regularly used feeding site.

The Water-rat is not entirely nocturnal, which is unusual among Australian rodents, with most activity taking place around sunset and sometimes foraging in full daylight. They appear to be territorial, with home ranges in South-east Queensland of 2-10 hectares, and where populations are dense there is considerable fighting, particularly among males, many of which have damaged tails.

Head and body length - about 300mm, Tail - about 275mm, Weight - 600-755g
Colour - almost black to slate grey above, white to orange below. Tail thick, well covered by dark hair, usually with a white tip. Head and body somewhat compressed, body tapering gradually to tail. Small ears, eyes and nostrils set high on head. Hind feet broad and partially webbed. Apart from the Platypus, the Water-rat is the only amphibious Australian mammal.

READY FOR THAT INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAY ?



Last year fifty Nats and friends visited Lord Howe Island as extended outings. Such was the enjoyment of the experience we have been requested to organise something similar in the near future.

The choice this time, by popular demand, is Vanuatu (formally the New Hebrides). This island group is 2500 km north - east of Sydney and offers something for everyone.

Other than an idyllic south sea island ambience our holiday will include a couple of nights on Tanna Island where Mt. Gasur, the worlds most accessible active volcano, shoots glowing ash and stones into the air. A night visit should provide the thrill of a lifetime.

Anticipating a favourable response, Harvey World Travel of Stanthorpe, can secure a one week holiday including airfares and self - contained accomodation for approx. \$ 1100 per person twin share.

Remember this is an international destination so a current passport is required. The departure date will coincide with the Easter school holidays 1998.

Expressions of interest by 7th December 1997 (Nats Christmas Party) is called for at this stage, with more information being available from Errol and Annette Walker 076 812008.

Firm bookings will be required by 31st December 1997 and these bookings with deposit will be processed in the order they are received by Harvey World Travel.

Looking forward to hearing from you,
Errol and Annette Walker.



Stanthorpe Field Nats. Club
Outing and Meeting Programme 1997 - 1998

<u>Date</u>		<u>Activity</u>	<u>Leader or Speaker</u>
November	23 Outing	West Bald Rock	Geoff Walker
	26 Meeting	General First Aid	Stanthorpe Ambulance
December	7	Christmas Break-up at Heritage Park 4.00pm	
January	18 Outing	Nundubbermere Falls	Roger Logan
February	22 Outing	Teviot Falls	Alan Jones
	25 Meeting	Canning Stock Route W.A.	John Bourne
March	21/22 Campout	Lost World, Lamington	Fred Simpson
	25 Meeting	Touring Overseas	Errol Walker
April	19 Outing	Acacia Plateau	Millie Marsden
	22 Meeting	Nostalgia	Millie Marsden
May	24 Outing	Mt. Janet	Lincoln McPhee
	27 Meeting	Plants of the Granite Belt	Jean Harslett
June	6/7/8 Campout	Queen's Birthday Weekend	Kris Carnell
	24 Meeting	West Australia	Rod Hutchin
July	19 Outing	Wallangarra Ridge	Brian Dodd
	22 Meeting	North Queensland	Kris Carnell
August	23 Outing	Cherrabah	Liz Bourne
	26 Meeting	AGM and Remember Last Year	
September	6 Outing	The Desert (extra half day for Wildflowers)	Kris Carnell
	20 Outing	Toowoomba Parks & Places	Rob McCosker
	23 Meeting	Programme to be advised	Bob Amos

This proposed list of activities is subject to change, please watch for updates in the Newsletter.