

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 32

October 1972

P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe.

Officers and Committee 1972 - 1973.

President	Mrs.R. Harslett	Ph. Amiens 5U.
Vice Presidents	Mr. W. Cathcart and Mr. F. Wilkinson.	
Secretary	Mr. E. Walker	Ph.888
Treasurer	Mrs.R. Leisemann	
Editors	Mr. I. Jackson and Mrs. D. Orr.	
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Mrs.B. Krautz and Mrs.W. Cathcart.	
Librarian	Mrs.R. Tremeer	
Publicity Officer	Mr. T. Chapman	
Bushwalking Officer	Mr. R. McCosker	
Geology "	Mr. P. Higgins	
Flora "	Mrs.W. McCosker	
Fauna "	MissJ. Westcott	
Youth "	Mr. G. Marsden.	

Activities.

Meetings	4th Wednesday of each month
	C.W.A. Rooms 8 p.m.
Outings	Sunday preceeding 4th Wednesday.

Annual Subscriptions.

Single \$1.50	Family \$2.00
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Programme.Field Outings:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Wildflowers & Mt. Banca	22nd October	Mr.P.Higgins and Miss J. Westcott.
Queen Mary Falls Area	19th November	Mr. D. Orr.
Girraween Park - Chirstmas Barbeque	December	McCosker Family.

Meetings:

<u>Subjcet.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker.</u>
Through the Centre	25th October	McCosker Family.
Scouting Today	22nd November	Mr. I. Jackson.
No Meeting in December.		

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Did you Know that the AIMS of our Club are as follows:

- The study of all branches of natural history.
- Preservation of the flora and fauna of Queensland.
- Encouragement of a spirit of protection towards native birds, animals and plants.
- To assist where possible in scientific research.
- To publish a monthly newsletter.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALISTMinutes of General Meeting held 27th September, 1972.

Fifty three members were present with apologies being received from seven.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Moved Mr.I.Jackson, seconded Mr. M. Passmore that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted as written in the Newsletter Carried.

Inward Correspondence: (i) Circular with details of a school on "Insects" at Lismore.

(ii) Resignation from the club by Mr. & Mrs. T. Chapman.

(iii) Newsletters from other Nats. Clubs.

(iv) D.P.I. advice of closure of Duck Season.

Outward Correspondence: (i) Letter to Board of Adult Education with details of September outing.

Moved Mr.J.Verri, seconded Mrs.McDonald that the correspondence be received and adopted. Carried.

Treasurer's Report: No statement prepared owing to absence of Treasurer.

Miss J. Westcott acted in this capacity.

General Business: A show of hands indicated that the Club was 100% in favour of having its own badge. Further details will be obtained re cost etc.

The past President, Mr.W.Cathcart, welcomed Mrs.J.Harslett to the Presidency for the ensuing term.

A discussion on conservation followed when the merits of saving limestone caves and coloured sands were considered. The political aspect of conservation was mentioned by Mr.M.Passmore, who then moved that we (as a club) write to the local member of Parliament with out views on the Cooloola issue. Seconded by Mr.W.Cathcart.

Petitions available for signatures on the issues of the Cooloola sands and Mt.Etna caves were received by the President. Several specimens were passed around the meeting and discussed accordingly.

Outings Reports: Mr.M.Passmore reported on the outing to Coolmunda Dam and the Inglewood Forest at which there was an attendance of approx. 30 members.

Mr.P.Higgins outlined the October outing to the "Town Hills" which will be led by Miss J.Westcott and himself.

The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m. after which a slide programme of "Last Year's Outings" compiled by Mr.R.Mccosker and Mr.E.Walker was conducted. Leaders of each outing were invited to describe the particular outing led by him or her.

Supper followed where Mr. & Mrs.T.Chapman were farewelled.

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Congratulations go to Geoffrey Marsden on gaining his Naturalists Badge in the Senior Section of the Scout Association in August.

Geoffrey made a detailed study of wild flowers in our district and is a keen member of our Club and has been working towards his Queen Scout Badge for some time.

The Club is pleased to know that our members are able to gain some knowledge and benefit from our outings and meetings to help them in other fields.

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Did you know that the shining starling (Aplonis Metallica) not only performs remarkable flight evolutions in flocks, but breeds in companies building up to 300 nests in a single tree!!

October 1972.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

The following letter is self-explanatory:

12 Wallangarra Rd.,
STANTHORPE.
Wed. 27th Sept.

The Secretary,
Stanthorpe Field Naturalists Club,
STANTHORPE.

Dear Sir,

On the 13th Oct., I take up a position with the Rural Youth and shortly after that date Irene and I will be going to Bundaberg to live.

I assure you we will find it very hard to say goodbye to the Granite Belt and all the friends we have made here, and resigning from this Club is one of the unhappy necessities of moving to another district.

We will always have very happy memories of our five years in Stanthorpe particularly the time spent with the Stanthorpe Nats.Club. We will certainly visit Stanthorpe from time to time and trust that we can join you again at outings and meetings.

Remember if you are ever in Bundaberg, there will be two fellow-Nats. happy to see you.

All the best to the committee and members and may the S.N.C. continue to help people appreciate and conserve the natural beauty of the Granite Belt.

Yours faithfully,

Sgd. T.D.Chapman
(Tom Chapman).

We all realize that we have to make the break sometime, but we feel it will be difficult to find a person to fill the roles Tom and his wife have played in our club.

Tom has to his credit the founding of two Naturalist Clubs, Chinchilla and Stanthorpe, and is well known for his work in and out of the district. At present he is publicity officer and was the person responsible for the suggestion of a club badge.

Mrs. Chapman has played a large part in the publication of our Newsletter since the inception of our club, and is currently co-editor. She is also noted for her keen bird studies.

The Club extends their warmest wishes of good luck to them in their new home at Bundaberg.

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Forthcoming Outing to Mt.Banca:

Members will meet at the Park at 9.30 a.m. on 22nd October, and go from there to Westcott's Nursery where there will be much to interest photographers and bird watchers.

A climb to the Mt.Banca lookout will be followed by a visit to Peter Higgins' property, where the wildflowers should be worth seeing, and if time permits some members may like to visit Little Broadwater.

Lunch will probably be at the nursery to save carrying, but there is not much walking involved in the outing.

J.WESTCOTT.

---oOo---

October 1972.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Report on the Inglewood Outing:

Despite a little confusion about the date (which turned out to be advantageous as the wildflowers were fading) some 30 or so (normal) members braved the dust and the flies on a perfect day to enjoy this very different area. The fundamental difference is one of geology as this sedimentary area of lower cretaceous age is very different from our granite countryside.

Our initial stop was at an extensive wildflower patch which contained many most unusual species. These 'Siliceous argillites' represent some of the toughest sites a plant could choose and this undoubtedly accounts for the unusual flora, dominated by several acacias, the tallest being 'yarran'. The variety held interest for a long time and the group slowly worked their way to the Coolmunda Dam.

The picnic area was an ideal spot for lunch, but proved a fascinating spot for the bird watchers, who almost escaped from the group completely. Indeed the whole area is a credit to the I.W.S. and the members agreed the whole project has been very worthwhile despite the controversy about how much it would contribute to the G.N.P. Those who are closer to nature realize there are other forms of life to be considered.

The Cypress forests north of Inglewood were the next point of interest. These natural forests are a marked contrast to the pine plantations being a modification of the indigenous stand. The work gives a bias towards one species but the basic species composition remains unaltered. The use of hormones such as 245-T and picogram that have provoked such controversy in Vietnam was discussed and most agreed, that like everything else used carefully and with discretion, it presents no danger. These forests are managed for multiple use and this concept was of interest as in this case it means timber, cattle, protection and recreation can be integrated into one management concept.

An area of gilgais was also of interest to those who hadn't seen this unusual distortion of the landscape, and fleeting glances of emus and wallabies kept eyes peeled.

The final stop was at the site of an ancient swamp where the trees of some 100 million years ago have been preserved. It was in such swamps that the dinosaurs lived and judging by the sagging rear springs this provided an interesting conclusion to the day of diversified interests.

MAURICE PASSMORE.

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ANIMALS SEEN ON INGLEWOOD OUTING:

Large sand goanna
Red Kangaroo
Red-necked Wallaby.

Frill-necked Lizard
Swamp Wallaby

Koalas have been seen in this area, but we were not fortunate enough to sight one.

J.WESTCOTT.

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Did you know that it is better to use white toilet paper as the dyes in coloured tissues contribute to water pollution.

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[REMINDER: Have you paid your subscription for 1972 - 1973?]

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.REMEMBER LAST YEAR?

The 27th September, a night to remember - in fact a night to remember last year!

Our thanks go to Errol and Robin for compiling the many excellent slides, the photographers who came forward with their works and the outing leaders present to describe each outing.

It may have been hiking to Red Rock Gorge, looking for opal at Swanfels, sliding down the rocks at The Junction or climbing those "gentle" slopes at North Branch, or perhaps it was the chattering teeth at Kelvin Falls with the frost chilling the bones, the rocks near Race Course Creek, the climb down Undercliffe or the storm at Taloom Falls. Whatever it was, memories came flooding back at "Remember Last Year".

A MEMBER.

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HANDY HINTS:

Bird watching can be an absorbing and rewarding hobby which requires very little outlay or equipment.

Neville W. Cayley in his book "What Bird is That", a guide to the birds of Australia, states that the first essential item of equipment for any observer is a pair of good field-glasses. He also states a pocket book is another necessity into which field notes should be made. These should include date and locality, feeding habits, call-notes or song, composition and situation of the nest, description of eggs and number in clutch and plumage of fledglings.

These notes should be made "on the spot" and later transferred to a diary, a loose leaf book or folder devoted to the particular species.

Mr. Cayley also states that drab-coloured clothing is less conspicuous in the field than light-coloured attire and therefore has a less disturbing effect on birds.

With the aid of a mirror tilted and affixed to the end of a long stick nests out of reach may be studied. A mirror can also be used to reflect light into dark holes and similar places used as nesting sites.

"What Bird is That" is a well laid out book fully illustrated by the author and is published by Angus and Robertson Ltd. Although it is not a pocket book it is an excellent reference book describing everything a bird watcher would like to know. This book is now published in a new 'portable' field edition, 7 1/4" x 6" for \$2.95.

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Next month's Handy Hints will be "How to take Better Photographs". Please send in any of your 'trade secrets' on this subject.

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Did you know that scientists and technicians are using fish scales as a biological calendar to determine the age of fish?

Many scaled fish, from salt or fresh water, have their growth cycle recorded in their scales in the form of minute concentric rings which grow annually like those in tree trunks. By properly identifying and counting the rings it is possible to arrive at the fish's age. They can be 'read' under a microscope or, in the case of large fish, by holding the scales up to the light. Accuracy is necessary, and if the markings have become blurred, a check can be made by counting growth markings in spine, vertebrae and bones!

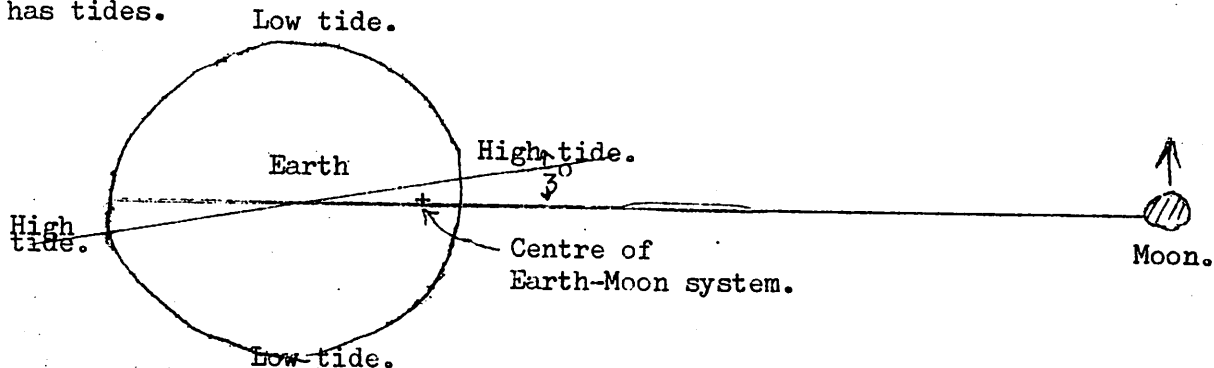
(from U.N.A. Newsletter Feb. '72).

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.TROUBLE WITH THE CLOCK:

For many years the little wooden bird in my old cuckoo clock has faithfully, and accurately, announced the hours. Recently, however he was one "pip" ahead of the ten o'clock news. How could the bird be wrong? Later that night I was relieved to learn that it was the sun, moon and the stars that differed after all, and that Greenwich Mean Time had had to be adjusted by one second. Intrigued I delved further into the question, to find that the length of a day was increasing by approximately 2 milliseconds (0.000002) per century, and that the moon is spiralling away from the earth at about 3 centimetres (just a little over an inch per year. How about that as an argument for daylight saving?!

I further found that it is all bound up with the tides. Now I thought I knew all about tides - the water is attracted by gravitation to the moon, and to a lesser extent the sun, and so the high tide follows the moon more or less as the earth spins. The high tide, on the opposite side, is due to centrifugal force; as the centre of the earth-moon system is not at the centre of the earth but about 1000 miles below the surface where the gravitational high tide is formed. Friction, of course, means the water lags a bit, and in fact this is three degrees.

Now that sounds simple enough, until one realises that because the rotation period of the earth is shorter than the moon's orbital period (one day versus twenty-eight days) the lagging tides are carried ahead of the line joining the centre of the earth to the centre of the moon, and that the land also has tides.



Thus the earth's spin is actually dragging the moon round.

Now the effect of this pull is greatly affected by distance (as the inverse sixth power). As the moon's orbit is excentric, then the acceleration at the perigee (the closest point) is much greater than the apogee, forcing the moon into an even more elliptical and larger orbit. Thus the energy of the earth's spin is slowly being dissipated as tidal energy, and the days are getting longer.

Palaeontological evidence suggests the length of day during the Devonian period (when the corals forming the Texas Caves were alive) was 22 hours, and this fits in with calculations based on tidal energy when the moon was 2.25 earth radii closer to the earth.

It is, however, interesting to note that if we extend these calculations based on present day values, then the moon was very close to the earth two billion years ago. Undoubtedly the values are not exact, but are close, and evidence suggests the earth and moon are 4.6 billion years old. Here it is necessary to utilise the theory of continental drift, as most tidal energy is associated with shallow seas.

The little wooden bird is now as accurate as of yore.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.A NATURALIST:

Some think a naturalist is a person bare,
 Others say he has flowers in his hair,
 Some think he is a know-all
 But they are due for a fall;
 For none of these descriptions
 Befits a person who pays subscriptions
 To be a naturalist gay
 And flee from the fray.

To study nature and her ways,
 Her beauty, wonder and displays,
 To hike with pack
 Upon one's back
 To untouched places new
 Seen only by a few.
 Or note with interest rewarding
 Birds, flowers, plants and animals, affording
 Knowledge gained
 At a price unnamed.

A naturalist is not a person bare,
 Or one that goes bare,
 He is one to listen to and see -
 Actually, he is like you or me
 An interest in the world taking
 Of Mother Nature's making.

R.A.D.

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WAYS TO IMPROVE AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT - AIR:

Your car is a major source of air pollution. Don't let your car idle for long periods - switch off the engine in traffic delays and when parking temporarily.

Keep your car well-tuned. An air/fuel ratio meter or exhaust carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon meter will check defective ignition or compression condition.

Avoid excessive use of the choke, hard acceleration and unnecessary revving of the engine. Have a crankcase emission control device fitted to your vehicle - your garage will advise you. When buying a new car, be conscientious about pollution emission levels of different makes and models. Keep your car properly maintained - clean oil and air filters and ignition are important.

Organise car pools from your suburb to avoid wasting passenger space. Don't drive your car everywhere. Walk, bicycle (the exercise is beneficial) or use public transportation (less pollution per passenger).

Avoid burning rubbish or garden refuse. If you MUST burn, make sure the material is dry and that the incinerator is not overloaded, so that the material will burn without smoke.

Instead of burning your newspapers, save them for a waste paper drive, or give them to a chain or grocery store for wrapping paper. Don't burn plastics, especially white plastic (polyvinylchloride) - this gives off corroding hydrochloric acid fumes.

If you live in home units or a block of flats, carefully observe the incinerator regulations.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Proposed Programme of Meetings and Outings for 1973:

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>
Bluff River	21st January	Phillip Ingram
The Signpost	25th February	Mrs.J. Harølett
Red Rock Gorge - Camp-out	24th-25th March	W. Cathcart.
Boorook	22nd April	B. Leisemann
Castle Rock	20th May	R. McCosker
Paddy's Flat	24th June	E. Walker
Spicer's Peak	22nd July	Ray Tremeer
Jollys Falls Area	19th August	Mrs.D.McCosker.

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Meetings:

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
First Aid in the Bush	24th January	Mr.F.Guerney
Brookvale Park	28th February	Mr.L.Coburn
Birds	28th March	Mr.C.Cameron
Adventures with Malcolm Wilson	25th April	Malcolm Wilson
Gibraltar Range National Park	23rd May	Mr.R.Payne
Photographing Wild-flowers	27th June	Mr.Merv.Hodge
"Remember Last Year"	25th July	Film Night
Basic Geology	22nd August	Peter Higgins.

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WHAT'S THE USE OF FORESTS?

Forests are the greatest achievement in ecological revolution - the largest, most complex and most self-perpetuating of all ecosystems. Roughly one third of the world's land area is forestland.

There is little doubt that forests regulate water supply by restricting run-off during the peak rainy periods, and releasing water through springs and rivers during the dry seasons. Thus the total amount of water available for use may be significantly increased through its release from the forests in those seasons when it is most needed.

Forests also act as windbreaks, protecting the cultures from wind and dust, and they affect the composition of the atmosphere.

Green plants are the only organisms capable of converting radiant energy from the sun into chemical energy. During this process of photosynthesis, carbon dioxide is assimilated and oxygen is released. The total rate of net photosynthesis is estimated to fix nearly 80 billion tons of carbon per year. When it is realized that nearly half of this process occurs in forests, their significance as atmosphere purifying agents would be clearly appreciated.

Forests, therefore, are not only one of the climatic buffers on which mankind depends but they make, as well, a valuable contribution towards alleviating physical and mental stresses resulting from over-crowding.