

No. 53

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST

Sept. 1974.

Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalists Club.

P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe  
Q'land. 4380.

Officers and Committee 1974-1975

President	Mr. F. Wilkinson
Vice Presidents	Mr. N. Butler
	Mr. M. Passmore
Secretary	Mr. D. Pfrunder
Treasurer	Miss G. Lancaster
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Fauna Officer	Brian McDonagh
Geology Officer	Maurice Passmore
Youth Officer	Robin McCosker
Bushwalking Officer	Mrs. Jean Harslett
Committee Members	Mrs. Jean Harslett
	Mr. Errol Walker

ACTIVITIES

MEETINGS: 4th Wednesday of each month  
C.W.A. Rooms at 8.00 p.m.  
OUTINGS: Sunday preceeding 4th Wednesday

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single - \$1.50                      Family - \$2.00

PROGRAMME

FIELD OUTING:

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>
Red Rock Gorge	September 22nd	Geoff Marsden

MEETING:

September 25th                      "The Continental Drift"  
by Maurice Passmore

SPECIAL NOTE:

Time of departure from Weeroona Park for next outing on Sept. 22nd will be 8.00 a.m. owing to 20 mile drive and the 4 mile walk in to the Gorge.



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MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING HELD 28TH AUGUST, 1974

Meeting opened at 8.10 p.m. with 23 present and 10 apologies.  
President's Opening remarks:

The President welcomed the Guest Speaker, Mr. Noel Bonner and his brother Tony. Explanation was given for the delay in the despatch of the August newsletter.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING FOR JULY:

Moved Mr. R. McCosker and seconded by Mr. Passmore that the minutes as read be confirmed - carried.

INWARD CORRESPONDENCE:

Letter from Mrs. M. Fauntleroy re information provided by the Club on the locality of unspoiled beauty spots.  
Letter from Board of Adult Education, Toowoomba, acknowledging submission for speakers for Mr. N. Bonner.  
Newsletters from other Naturalists clubs.  
Press release re declaration of Double Gully Fauna Sanctuary.  
Information from D.P.I, supplied for Hon. Protectors and/or Hon. Rangers.  
Order In Council under the Fauna Conservation Act of 1952 re declaration of recent Fauna Sanctuaries with maps showing area of each and locations.

OUTWARD CORRESPONDENCE:

Letter to Board of Adult Education re Speakers Fee for Mr. Noel Bonner.  
Letter to Mr. M. Birkhart thanking him for his help with the Wilsons Peak and Connolly Dam outing on July 21st. Letter to Queensland Naturalists Club re our willingness to assist with board for possible visit of French Naturalists and help them with study of this area.  
Monthly report and advertising of meeting and outing activity submitted to Board of Adult Education.  
Motion - Moved Mr. D. Ffrunder and seconded Mrs. W. Flinn that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted. Carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM CORRESPONDENCE:

General discussion on letter from Mrs. Fauntleroy.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Balance as at 24.7.1974	30.25
Subs. received	1.50

Balance as at 28.8.1974	\$31.75
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Motion - Moved Miss G. Lancaster and seconded by Mrs. T. Archer that the Treasurer's Report be adopted and accounts be passed for payment - carried.

OUTING REPORT:

Mr. Geoff Marsden reported that the outing to Red Rock Gorge on Sunday 25th August had to be called off owing to heavy rain as the party arrived at Walsh's homestead.



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NEXT OUTING:

The outing to Red Rock Gorge is now re-scheduled to take place on Sunday Sept. 22nd with early departure time of 8.00 a.m. from Weeroona Park, replacing the September camp out to Mt. Barney. Would MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE that the four mile walk from the cars in to the Gorge is rather a rugged one needing good stout walking boots and lots of energy. It will also be necessary to carry lunches and water requirements for the day with you in to the Gorge.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday Sept. 25th C.W.A. Rooms 8.00 p.m.  
Guest Speaker Mr. M. Passmore - "The Continental Drift".

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Moved Mrs. F. Wilkinson and seconded by Mrs. T. Archer that a letter of sympathy be sent to Mr. & Mrs. W. Cathcart on the loss of their son in India and the loss of Mr. Cathcart's Mother. Carried.

AFTER MEETING PROGRAMME:

"Across Sturt's Stony Desert" by Mr. Noel Bonner, was a very interesting movie with commentary by Mr. Bonner and his cousin Edwin. These two boys crossed the desert area in Central Australia in a "Monx" beach buggy and it was most interesting to see the flora and fauna now apparent after some good rains in the area.

The Meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

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The way things are today . . . if someone offered me the World on a platter . . . I'd take the PLATTER!!!"

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The following is a copy of a letter to Mr. T. Spiller re the new Mount Banca & Caves Sanctuary area, and could well remind us all of the reason for such Sanctuaries..

"With reference to the recent declaration of Mount Banca and Caves as a fauna sanctuary please find attached copies of the relevant Order in Council published in the Government Gazette on 13th July, 1974, page 1554.

Public awareness of declared fauna sanctuary areas quite often deters illegal shooting and trapping. To assist you in this regard sanctuary notices are being forwarded under separate cover. These should be displayed in prominent positions on the sanctuary.



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There is more to the sanctuary system than deterring shooters and trappers! This opportunity is taken to emphasise the major function of a fauna sanctuary and the role it can play in overall fauna conservation. Habitat is vital to the natural survival of fauna.

To ensure that fauna remains throughout normal distributions it is essential that adequate suitable feed and shelter (habitat) be retained.

This Department is in the process of setting aside representative areas throughout the State solely for fauna. It is intended that these areas be large (over 2000 hectares), but not necessarily numerous. Habitats within these areas will largely remain undisturbed thus helping to ensure the basic survival of most species.

Most species of fauna migrate in some way. Some move interstate or overseas, whilst others more locally. Droughts for instance precipitate such nomadic behaviour. To properly survive fauna requires larger areas than a few selected fauna reserves.

Property owners can play an important role in ensuring that fauna remains in acceptable numbers throughout natural distributions. You have already indicated that you desire to contribute to this concept by setting aside land as a fauna sanctuary.

The most important contribution you can make is to ensure that adequate natural habitats are preserved. Large scale land clearing, alteration of watercourses and overgrazing cause drastic alterations to existing fauna populations. Provision of extra water (bores, dams etc.) selective clearing and retention of critical areas such as rainforest, open forest and swamps contribute to fauna survival.

It is sincerely hoped that you will set an example in rational land use and balanced development. This should encourage others to adopt this vital fauna conservation principle.

Without adequate fauna reserves and functioning fauna sanctuaries conservation of fauna will have little meaning."

(Sgd.) Director Fauna Conserv.  
Branch. D.P.I.

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Doing nothing is the most tiresome job in the world because you can't stop to rest.

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September, 1974.

Spring is certainly the season when the dedicated bird-watcher - this is NOT a report from Queensland's sunny beaches - reaps a rich reward. The trills and warbles of birds seeking a mate and the prolonged carolling of others proclaiming their territory is music to the ears of all who care to listen, and this concert is enjoyed in combination with the scents and glorious colour of our wild flowers. It must be confessed though that this Garden of Eden also has its serpents, and because bird lovers creep through the bush very quietly I suspect they meet with more than their fair share of snakes. The frantic leap to safety reminds us that it is not only Spring that is "Sprung".

Just occasionally - very occasionally - I find it in my heart to pity a snake! Because we feed them and provide shrubs and creepers for cover our house is surrounded by a positive multitude of small birds. Right now from one window I see two silver eyes, beak to beak, whirling high in the air in a courtship flight, and a red-browed finch is jumping up and down holding a fluffy white feather, obviously hoping to charm some female with the quality of the proffered bedding. Yesterday a male wren in all the shining glory of his new blue and black suiting was flitting back and forth with a yellow jasmine petal, anxious no doubt to lay it with his heart at the feet of some demure brown jenny wren. If however, a sudden outburst of concentrated angry twitters and harsh screeches reaches my ear, I know a snake has slithered into view and those birds just don't let up for one second. They hover overhead and scream abuse the whole time, and this is when I feel a little sorry for the snake. Just imagine if in his progress through the bush he is constantly assailed with all that din and fury!

I recently heard a snake story - with a moral too I'm sure. A young lad had been given his very first air gun. Getting tired of target practice he decided to defy the rules and try his skill with a real live bird. He chose a noisy miner, more commonly called a Mickey or Soldier bird, and assumed that the apprehensive cries from the bird were directed at him and his weapon. A stinging sensation on his heel showed him his error all too late. He had been bitten by a brown snake and it was the snake which had caused the loud calls of alarm from his intended victim. Maybe he should have known that one more common name for that particular bird is the "Snake-bird".

Zadie Newman.



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THE PEREGRINE FALCON:

While pruning I was startled by the swish of wings and a loud croak. A peregrine falcon was attacking a white-faced heron, commonly known as the blue crane. The falcon dived on the heron four times, each time the great lumbering bird dodged to one side about a foot with the falcon whistling past.

The peregrine falcon, literally "wandering falcon" has a world-wide distribution. Known as the Duck Hawk in North America, it is reputed to be able to dive at over 100 m.p.h. Rather a shy bird, it prefers heavily timbered and rugged mountainous country. It's pattern of flight is most distinctive, with a rather plumpish body, and a swifter wing-beat than most other hawks, almost like the flight of a pigeon. It's food can be any bird, even one much larger than itself, killed on the wing with a blow from the foot.

The nest is usually on a ledge of a rocky cliff. We were privileged to have a pair nest on the cliff near here some years ago. The eye sight of the chicks was amazing, as they would begin to cry for food minutes before we could see the parent birds as tiny specks.

A pair seem to hunt as a team. One bird dived openly on a group of feeding doves and as they departed in panic a second bird was waiting for them in the adjacent timbers. I was unable to find out whether either bird had made a kill.

A few years before Giraween was developed as a tourist area, a pair nested on the front pyramid. We could not find the nest, but the two birds objected to our presence on the rock.

Unfortunately the peregrine falcon is said to be becoming increasingly rare throughout the world, probably because of pressure of man's population. Witness the pair on the Pyramid.

B. McDONAGH.

I wonder just how many people who have lived in the district for many years are aware of the extensive variety of wild flowers so close to the town. Each week I have made a point of doing some exploring in various areas and the variety of the ground orchids is a shock. Others spotted are too numerous to mention but to name a few, *Pinna*, *sarsparilla*, *kunzea*, *erica*, all types of *acacias*, *cytissus*, *hovea*, wild iris, *leptospermum* etc. Having spent hours searching for identification I only regret that I am unable to name any more as the variety is so large.

M.F.