



The Granite Belt Naturalist



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Web site <https://mysd.com.au/fieldnats/>

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, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe, at 7.30pm
Outings: The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each month (Saturday outings as pre-arranged)
Subs: Single \$20.00, Family \$30.00 per annum, July to June

CLUB OFFICE BEARERS - 2019/2020

President	Jeff Campbell	46811420
Vice-presidents	Kris Carnell	46835268
	Peter Haselgrove	46837255
Secretary	Rob McCosker	46835371
Treasurer	Gunter Maywald	46810674
Newsletter Editor	Margaret Carnell	46835268
Publicity Officer	Jeff Campbell	46812008
Librarian	Laura Maywald	46810674

The Club thanks the Queensland Country Credit Union for their donation that enabled us to buy a printer.

Stanthorpe Field Naturalists is a group member of Granite Borders Landcare.

*Management Committee: President, Vice-Presidents,
Secretary, Treasurer*



**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

Coming Up

The magazine will be produced again next month. Please let us know of anything interesting you see. You don't have to have a photo.

We would appreciate any articles for the magazine. Thank You.

**Deadline for next newsletter
5th June 2020**

Manna from Heaven.



Psyllid and Lerps

On our last outing I was asked by Kerrie about the white spots on the ground under gum trees which I had to confess I hadn't seen. I had heard about Manna gums which at times drop large amounts of sweet white "manna", and in Cribb's book Wild Food in Australia they explain it thus-

"Some insects feeding on leaves and twigs produce considerable quantities of exudate, which sometimes falls in such large amounts that a tree appears to be raining. In other cases the exudate contains a considerable concentration of sugar extracted from the plant. Irregular, whitish, sugary deposits left on the leaf surface by evaporation of this exudate are generally termed manna. With some species of these insects the sugary solution, together with starch-like material, is used by the lava to form a cap-like structure under which it lives; such deposits have been termed lerp.

Both these products were very popular with the Aborigines and, in some areas, formed an important part of the diet for limited periods. Various species of *Eucalyptus* are the best known producers of manna and lerp. One early report suggested that up to nine kilograms of manna could be obtained from a single tree."

The best source of manna is the Manna gum *Eucalyptus viminalis* from South eastern Australia but Cribbs list six other species known to be producers.

I found more information in a State Forests of New South Wales Leaflet titled Forest Protection Research Division Series Number 7 -

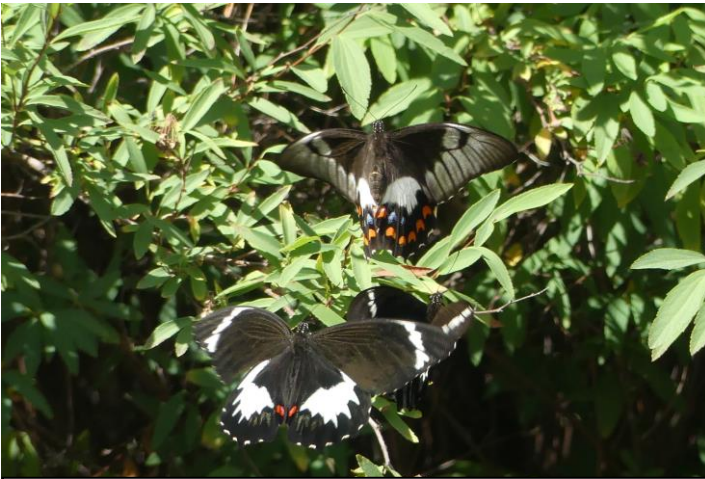
"The nymphs of many species secrete protective waxy or sugary coverings called lerps. The lerp helps to protect the nymph from natural enemies and dehydration in Australia's harsh climate. A few species form galls or pits on leaf surfaces, and some make leaves curl. Others are free-living and protect themselves by producing fluffy white threads between the young shoots and buds on which they are feeding. There are at least 10 genera of lerp-building psyllids on eucalypts. It is not yet known why some species occasionally have population explosions. Although psyllids have similar life

cycles, the conditions necessary to initiate and maintain high populations can differ between species. Climate is one of the main factors influencing psyllid populations. It not only influences the population but also the quality and quantity of available food and the effectiveness and abundance of natural enemies. For example, outbreaks have been recorded after a succession of unusually dry and/or wet conditions. One theory is that this form of stress improves the nutritional content of the foliage.”

I surmise that the rain following our recent drought has triggered this manna event. On the outing to the Aztec Temple we found lerps on Eucalypt leaves shooting from the base of a tree which was recovering from the bushfire and after scraping some off to taste I was disappointed to find they were not sweet.

Rob McCosker

Butterflies and their ilk at *Orana*



Female Orchard Butterfly – top - Male below

I expect everyone had noticed the large numbers of butterflies flitting everywhere this year since the rain. It started with Lemon Migrants. When we spent a few days at Woodgate just at the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic, they were hatching on the trees in the caravan park.

On a perfect autumn morning at the end of March, Kris and I went for a walk across the creek and part way up the mountain on our place. There were hundreds of Caper White butterflies on the stinking rogers and cobblers pegs which were in bloom. Finally found a use

for them! We were kept very busy with our cameras as we also saw Grass Blues, Meadow Argus, Common Crow, Blue Tiger, Orchard Butterfly, Lesser Wanderer and Vine Moth. . Some we were unable to photograph as they were too flitty. We used to get the Vine Moths in the grapes and one day when Jenny was wearing a yellow shirt and the weather was misty, she had a number of them on her shirt. She used to call their caterpillars her friends. There was a very active brown butterfly which turned out to be a Painted Lady, identified from a photo taken by Kris.

Around the middle of the month there was a male Common Eggfly on the strawberry tree feeding on honeydew produced by aphids on the leaves. A day or so later we saw the female in the petunias and later in the month saw another on a grevillea. As well as the Lemon Migrants we had a Yellow Migrant which we chased around the garden for ages before we managed to get a photo. I saw a flash of red on a white butterfly which alerted me to the fact that it was not a Caper White and Kris managed to get a photo which showed it was a Northern Jezabel. A few days later we found the remains of it (or another of its kind) with the abdomen very flat. We weren't sure if it was attacked by a bird or had a fungus. There has been an occasional Wanderer fluttering about.



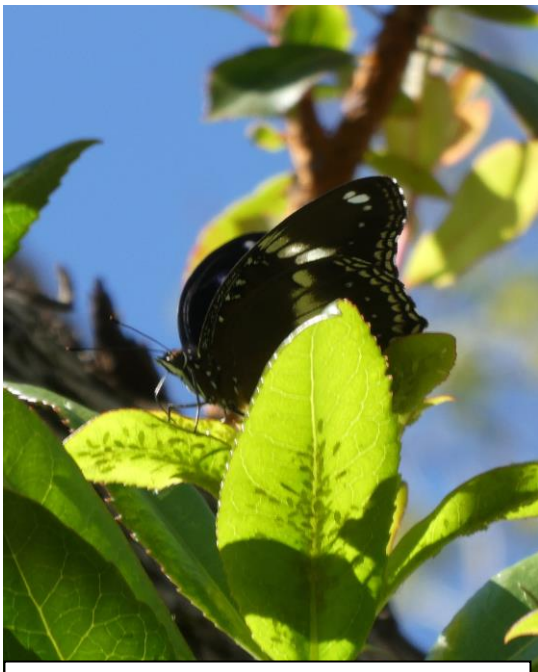
Ghost Moth

There have also been two different Hawk Moths feeding on the petunias in the day time. One has a pattern all over its wings and body and the other is olive green with a couple of yellowish spots on the forewings. One of the scrub wrens caught one of them and was fighting with it on the step. We found the forewings discarded and the bird was under the azalea trying to eat it. I guess it did it bit by bit. When we had a couple of millimetres of rain there were Ghost Moths just outside the kitchen window. We also watch hoverflies feeding at the flowers and have seen shiny green native bees a couple of times. I think they are carpenter bees.

One evening Kris was walking up from cleaning up dead trees in the Land Care Block when he saw a small gum tree badly infested with spitfires (saw-fly larvae) with huge clumps on the trunk and branches – more than he's ever seen before.

Now we are getting to the end of April there are far fewer butterflies – just the odd one. It has made being in isolation very interesting. We keep binoculars and cameras at the ready.

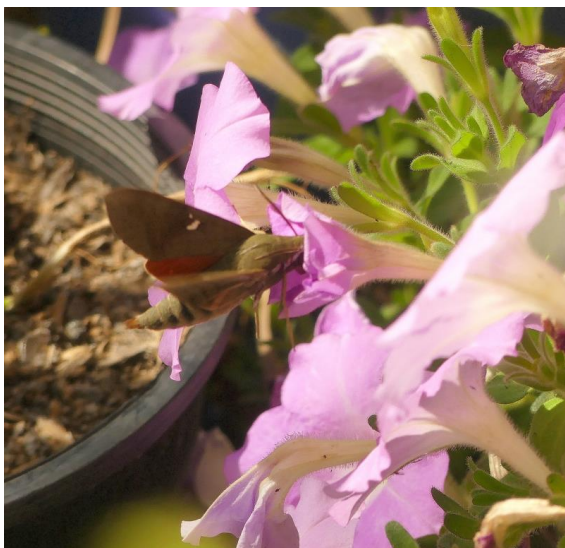
Margaret Carnell



Male Eggfly feeding on honeydew from aphids. You can see the aphids through the leaf.



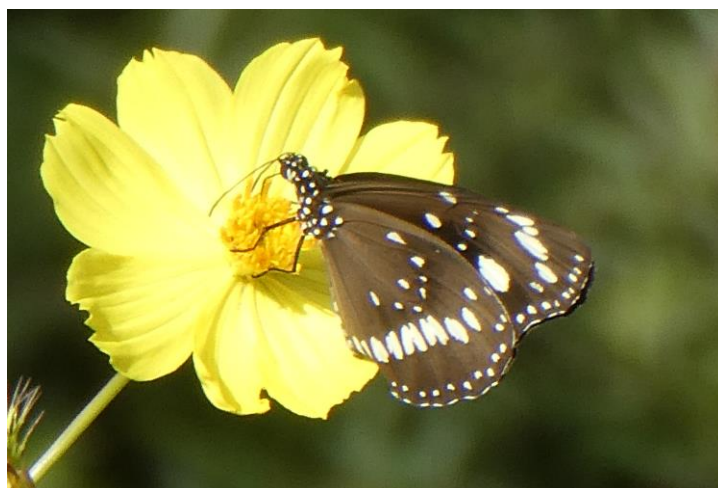
Male Eggfly with open wings. We did not get a photo of the female.



Left: Olive green Hawk Moth feeding on a Petunia. (bit hard to see)
Right: Wings of Hawk Moth discarded by Scrub Wren

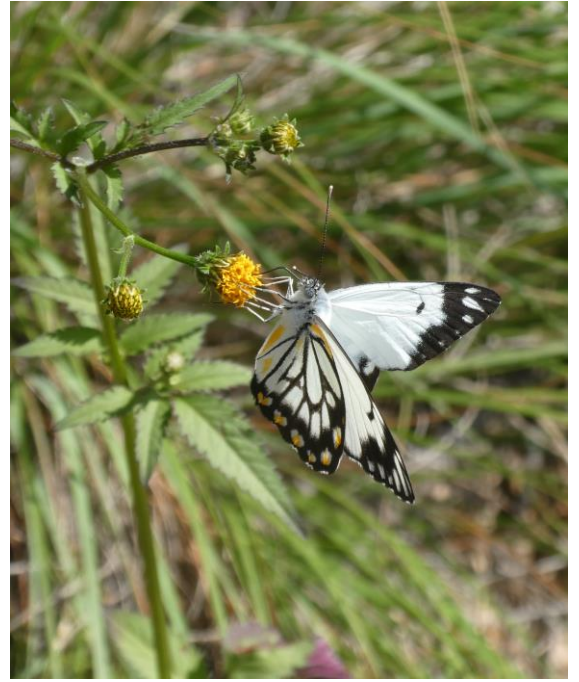


Above: Northern Jezebel
Right: Hawk Moth on a petunia
Below Left: Lemon Migrant (it
looks greener than it does in reality)
Below Right: Yellow Migrant



Far Left: Grass
Blue

Left: Common
Crow on yellow
cosmos

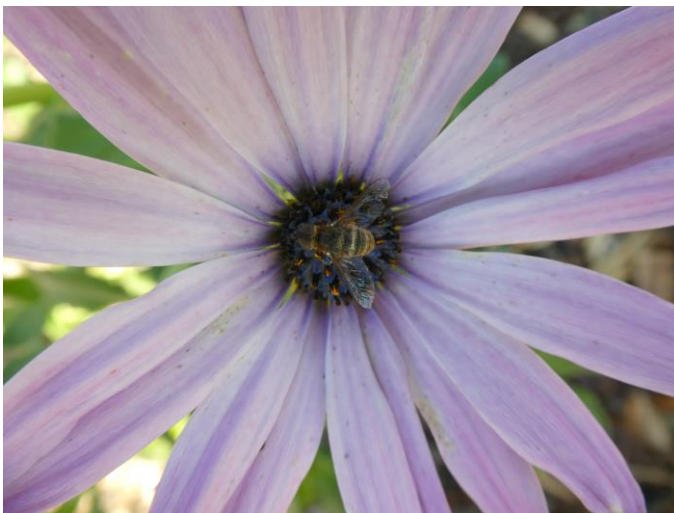


Top Left: Lesser Wanderer

Top Right: Caper White on Cobbler's Peg.

Middle: Saw-fly Larvae on gum tree.

Left: This interesting character was on a piece of paper towel in my kitchen one evening.



Top: Blue Tiger and Meadow Argus on a buddleia flower.

Middle Left: A very small bee or perhaps a fly on a daisy.

Middle Right: A beautifully patterned moth, *Utetheisa pulchelloides* trying to match a white daisy. The moth and larvae are poisonous

Bottom Left: Painted Lady.

Australian Naturalists' Network Get-together 2022

As you know the Australian Naturalists' Network Get-together 2020 has been cancelled due to Covid-19. We have the opportunity to host the next Get-together in 2022.

Most of the preliminary planning has already been done and therefore things should come together quite easily for the 2022 Get-together. However, we need to know if members support the Club hosting the ANN Get-together in 2022 though we stress that this does not commit anyone to being actively involved unless they choose to. Under normal circumstances a vote would have been taken at a general monthly meeting.

Would all members of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc. please indicate their support or otherwise for the Club to host the ANN 2022?

Please respond by email to: robinmcc@bigpond.com by the 31st May, 2020.

Spottings



Graham Rayner spotted these swans
on Quart Pot Creek and the St
Andrew's Cross Spider in his garden.

Most recently I witnessed a Brown Goshawk dragging a Wonga pigeon across to the back yard fence, leaving it in peace to devour it's meal. Didn't see the strike, but the tell-tale pile of grey feathers revealed the location. We think it was the female of a pair of our regular Wongas, as only the (whiter-capped) male turned up since. Luckily they had produced replacement units, having seen two well advanced juveniles (all 4 family at once) a couple of weeks earlier and at least one of them since.

Ian Milinovich



Brown Goshawk with its quarry



Bronwyn Carnell spotted this egg sac in a pine tree in Plant Street. Does anyone know what kind of eggs they are?



Wonga Pigeons prior to attack