



The Granite Belt Naturalist



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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

Sunday 21st June: *Blue Mountain* with Leon and Kerrie McCosker.
The outing will be followed by a meeting.

**Deadline for next newsletter
8th July 2020**

Pre-Outing Report to Blue Mountain June 21st 2020

Leaders Leon and Kerrie McCosker 46811737



View over Stanthorpe from Blue Mountain

The last time the club visited Blue Mountain was a half day trip on the 5th July 2014 and we climbed it from the northern side. This time we are starting from Leon and Kerrie McCosker's property at 335 Amosfield Road on the southern side and walking through the neighbour's property.

We will meet as usual at Weeroona Park for a 9.00am start and have morning tea after a look around the garden. The climb to the top is trackless though not far but quite steep and rocky in places,

so is Grade 7 by our Grading system. Don't let that put you off as we will have plenty of time to amble to the top and be back at the cars for lunch. There is an old Trig station at the top as it is the highest peak around, and at 977m, almost 60m higher than Mt Marlay, so there are good views of Stanthorpe and its surrounds.

We are planning to combine our monthly meeting with the outing, to be held after lunch, and then walk the track on the property which shows some of the historic tin mining activities.

Covid 19 Precautions

With the recent easing of restrictions due to the Covid 19 Pandemic the Club Committee has decided to resume activities in June. For this month we plan to hold a combined outing and meeting, with no monthly night meeting to be held in the CWA Rooms. Members are reminded to maintain 1.5m distancing and if possible bring your own chair for lunch. There will be hand sanitiser available.

Birds at *Orana*

Over the last couple of months there has been increased activity amongst the birds in our garden. Since the rain many of them are building nests and coming frequently to the bird baths. During the drought the bird baths were, of course very popular and we had to make sure to top them up as the water level dropped. We have also sighted a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles flying overhead. They have been around for years.



Scrub Wren near teapot

We have had Scrub Wrens coming onto the deck for some years now and coming inside at every opportunity, even if the screen is only open a few centimetres. We put crumbs on the table for them when we are eating outside and discovered they love cheese. One tried to take the cheese from Kris's plate. I discovered that natural yoghurt is not



Male Splendid Blue Wren

to their taste but they will eat the flavoured kind. The Superb Blue Wrens also started coming to be fed but they are much less frequent now that there is real food available. The Scrub Wrens do not visit as often either. If we have the stainless steel teapot on the table they come and peck at it and make a mess on the table. They have had a go at the camera and binoculars too. As well as the Superb Blue Wrens we have a pair of variegated wrens who come to the tree outside the kitchen window and fly at the glass till they are panting. They disappeared for months then turned up one day out of the



Male Variegated Wren

blue. They are still around. One day I looked out the kitchen window and saw two Variegated Wrens, a Striated Pardalote and a couple of Double Bars in the tree at the same time. We have taken photos through the window, so the quality of some is not perfect. The Striated Pardalotes also come to the window and pose and posture, spreading their wings to show the red spots on the back of them. The Double Bars congregate at the bird bath, occasionally about 20 of them and feed in the grass. One pair has built a nest in the Diosma bush close to the front deck. They were very busy when they were building but scorned some grass that I picked

because I thought it would be useful to them.

When it comes to honeyeaters there are Eastern Spinebills, Yellow-faced, Brown-headed, White-naped, White-eared, Red-wattle Birds, Noisy Friar Birds and Silvereyes. I'm including the last three in the honeyeaters.

The Olive-backed Orioles call quite close but we don't see them very often. When they come to the birdbath they hide behind branches as much as possible while waiting to have a drink. We did see them up the mountain and Kris was able to get a photo. The Satin Bower Birds are also fairly secretive but are suspected of nipping off several bluish petunia flowers and dropping them on the ground.



The usual common birds are also about, such as Magpies, Currawongs, Kookaburras, Butcher Birds, and Willie Wagtails and Crested Pigeons. The grey fantails are just as active as the Willie Wagtails and as hard to photograph. A pair of Grey Shrike Thrushes built in the shed as they have done for several years. This year they had three hatchings and lost the young ones just as they were fledged. Yesterday I saw a cat cross the yard near the wood heap and suspect that may be the culprit.

The Crimson Rosellas are usually more prolific than the Eastern Rosellas but sometimes we see mixed flocks. A pair of Crimson discovered the cosmos seeds in the front garden and had quite a feast. We thought they would come back until there were none left but they must have found something they prefer.

There are three different Thornbills that we see: Yellow-rumped, Inland (I think) and one other which I can't really identify. On occasion two or three Speckled Warblers feed with them.

We have always enjoyed having the birds about but during the Covid 19 lockdown they provided endless entertainment and we kept binoculars and cameras at the ready for a quick shot.

Margaret Carnell



Above: Currawong
Top Left: Crimson Rosella feasting on cosmos seeds
Right: Eastern Rosella



Top Left: Female Splendid Blue Wren enjoying a snack of cheese.

Top Right: White-naped Honeyeater

Middle: Pied Butcher Bird enjoys a bath.

Right: Olive-backed Oriole





Above: Willie Wagtail



Top Right: Double-barred Finches

Right: Brown-headed Honeyeater

Below: Grey Fantail just out of the bath.

Below Right: Eastern Spinebill feeding on Lachenalia





Top: Striated Pardalote

Above Left: Yellow-rumped Thornbill

Above Right: A Noisy Friarbird and a Yellow-faced Honeyeater share the bird bath.

Right: Crested Pigeon



Grasses in Storm King Area

Following good rains in February we experienced a flush of grass growth on our block with, interestingly a number of species being more plentiful than in normal seasons. Some grasses grew more vigorously than normal, with one specimen of kangaroo grass, *Themeda triandra*, having a seed-head height of nearly 180cm.

I found a new species of grass for the block and a careful search revealed only one specimen appeared to be present. It keyed out as Scented Top, *Capillipedium parviflorum*. I had not seen this grass on our block before even though it is on the Girraween list and is not listed as rare. Close examination revealed a large number of aphids on the flowering parts.

After checking the grasses on our block it seemed that most of them, except the kangaroo grass, appeared to be infested with the same small black aphids. The total number of aphids across the area must have been enormous and the corresponding effect on the production of the seed heads, where the concentration of aphids was, must have been significant.

A search of the internet suggested they were possibly a fairly common widespread species. With the onset of a couple of frosts they seem to have disappeared.



Close-up of beetles

Peter Haselgrove



Left & Above: Kangaroo Grass
Below L.: Aphids on seed head
Right: Grass Seed with beetles or bugs



Spottings



Graham Rayner spotted this fungus and vine at Queen Marys Falls



There were a lot of these droppings with berries in them on the tracks at *Orana*, perhaps from a fox. Graham commented on them and I found the source - *Solanum nigrum* (Black Nightshade)



Above: Case from a Ghost Moth that hatched after rain, found completely on top of the ground. Photo of the moth was in last month's magazine.

Left: Carpenter Bee on a callistemon leaf. It didn't move when we got close and when we looked at the photo we discovered it was caught in a spider's web. *Kris & Margaret.*

Books for Sale

Members, I have inherited quite a collection of natural history reference books, mostly botanical. If you are interested send me an email and I will forward a copy of the list. There are about 100 books, hence the list. It is not just what is in the photo.

They are for sale on a “make an offer” basis.

Col Hockings 0428 822 221

Email: pinaster@skymesh.com.au



Result of the vote regarding ANN

In the last Newsletter we asked for members to vote for or against the Club hosting the ANN Get-together in 2022 and I have received responses from 15 members, about half our membership, which is probably more than we would get at a meeting, with 13 for and 2 against, so I guess that is a definitive yes.

Rob McCosker