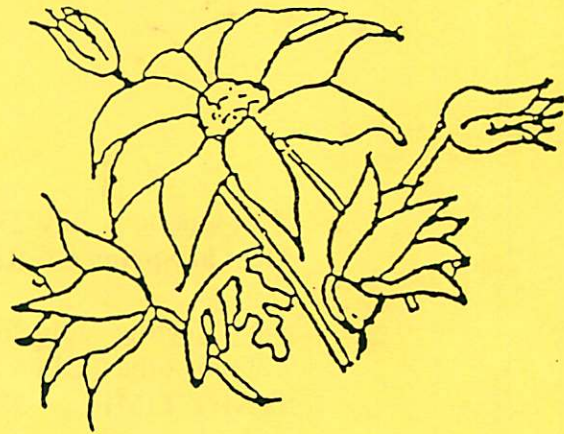


JULY 2000

Vol 321

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST



Monthly Newsletter of the

Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc.

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 7.30pm.
Outings: The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each Month.
Subscriptions: Single \$15.00 Family \$25.00 per annum July to June.
Address: Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc.,
P O Box 154,
Stanthorpe Q 4380.

CLUB OFFICE BEARERS 1999 - 2000

President	Desley McDonagh	46 813074
Vice-Presidents	Roger Logan	46 812493
	Millie Marsden	46 811593
Secretary	Liz Bourne	46 836374
Treasurer	Julia Brown	46 814540
Newsletter Editor	Robin McCosker	46 835371
Magazine Committee	Wendy & Neil Donges, Julie Beddow	
Publicity Officer	Patience James	46 811853
Librarian	Trish McCosker	46 835371
Management Committee	President , Vice-Presidents , Secretary , Treasurer	

COMING UP

Next Outing July 23rd Outing to Kinnane's Falls with Leader David Wilson -
Meet at Spring Ck Road turnoff outside Killarney at 9.30am.

Next Meeting July 26th Slide Program by David Wilson on Norfolk Island
7.30pm at the QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe. **PLEASE NOTE NEW
START TIME.**

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

6th August 2000

Mail contributions to The Newsletter Editor, P O Box 24, Severnlea Q4352
Fax to 4683 5371, e-mail robinmcc@halenet.com.au
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 28th June, 2000

Opening: The meeting opened at 7.35pm with President, Desley McDonagh, welcoming members and visitors.
Attendance: There were 24 present at the meeting and 6 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the last meeting, held on 24 May were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Roger Logan, seconded by Kath Sullivan. Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

1. Weekday Outings

Desley said she would organise the first of these at Girraween which would incorporate a short walk and a BYO barbeque lunch.

2. Save the Bilby Fund

A certificate acknowledging the Club's donation had been received from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. Further contributions could still be made at the meeting.

3. Patience James

Patience was welcomed back to the meeting after her recent hip operation.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

1. Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club - *Darling Downs Naturalist* - June 2000
2. Toowoomba Bushwalkers Club - *Footprint* - June 2000
3. Qld Naturalists Club - *QNC News* - July/August
4. Chinchilla Field Naturalists - *Urimbirra* - May/June 2000
5. Samson Total Technology - invoice for \$16.24
6. Qld Naturalists Club - Qld Natural History Award
7. Qld Parks and Wildlife Service - bilby certificate
8. Pro Bono - directory of organisations
9. Diana Holley - membership renewal
10. Senator Andrew Bartlett - information from Aust. Democrats
11. Mission Australia - request for donation
12. Mel and Judith Jurgensen - resignation from Club
13. Environmental Protection Agency - newsletter
14. Stanthorpe Branch of CWA - invitation to AGM on 7 August
15. Patience James - letter of thanks to Club members for their card and best wishes
16. Naturesearch - *Spotlight*

Outwards Correspondence:

1. Community service announcements for outings and meetings

This correspondence was accepted on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Rob McCosker. Carried.

Business Arising from the Correspondence:

Jean Harslett agreed to represent the Club at the AGM of the Stanthorpe Branch of the QCWA on 7 August.

Financial Statement:

Balance at 24/5/00 \$35.01

Receipts:

Subscriptions	65.00	
Room rent collection	11.45	
Change from Mag Postage	1.75	
Save the Bilby Fund	22.00	
Bank interest	<u>0.46</u>	
	100.66	100.66
		135.67

Expenditure:

Room Rent	12.50	
Save the Bilby Fund	44.00	
Govt tax	<u>2.10</u>	
	58.60	58.60
Balance as at 28/6/00		<u>\$77.07</u>

Accounts for payment:

Room rent	\$12.50
Magazine Postage	\$32.00

Samson Total Technology \$16.24

In the absence of the Treasurer, Julia Brown, the report was read out by Desley who moved the report for adoption and the payments to be made. This was seconded by Patience James.

Outing Report:

Roger Logan reported on the outing to Dianne and Alan Jones' property at Emu Creek, east of Warwick on 25 June. As there were quite a large number of people on this walk, Jean Harslett suggested that in future it might be desirable to appoint a deputy from the Club to assist the leader to keep track of all participants so that no one got lost.

Pre-outing Report:

David Wilson will be leading the next outing to Kinnane's Falls, below Wilson's Peak, on the 23 July.

General Business:

1. The Annual General Meeting will be held on 23 August and Desley reminded members to consider standing for Committee positions. Rob McCosker will not be re-nominating for the position of magazine editor.
2. Desley congratulated Kris and Margaret Carnell and other members of the Stanthorpe Camera Club on the success of the Photographic Society of Queensland's annual conference held in Stanthorpe over the Queen's Birthday Weekend.
3. Desley and Patience will be attending the conference of the Australian Naturalists Network being held in Alice Springs in July.

Specimens:

Rob McCosker had three tortoise hatchlings dug up in his herb garden.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Jean Harslett then gave a slide program after the meeting.

Reminder

Next month will see the close of another year for the Nats Club with the Annual General Meeting to be held on the 23rd. My time is up as Newsletter Editor and it is time for someone else to try their hand at one finger typing. I have been using a computer and word processor but, with the Club's photocopier, anyone with a simple typewriter can do the job, after all, the 'Spellchecker' doesn't know any botanical names !

Following the meeting there will be a showing of slides taken on previous outings as well as photos, to remind us of the good times we had and wonderful places we have seen, thanks to all the dedicated outings leaders. As usual the evening will conclude with supper and members are asked to please bring a plate (containing some morsels of your favorite delicacy to share - of course!)

Rob McCosker.

Coming Attractions

July	23 rd	Outing - Kinnanes Falls - Leader David Wilson
	26 th	Meeting - Slide Program on Norfolk Island by David Wilson
August	19 th	Outing - Combined with Warwick SGAP and Bill McDonald, Senior Botanist at the Brisbane Herbarium to Rosser's rainforest property near Killarney, to be confirmed.
	23 rd	Annual General Meeting with Slides and Prints of Past Outings followed by Supper

Report on Outing to the Steamers 25th June

Members met at Dianne and Alan Jones' property, "Gone Ferral", at about 9.00am then continued along the road through several creek crossings and gates to the Brett's Mill clearing for morning tea. A very large steam engine boiler was seen there, a relic of the timber cutting days. There were some people camping there as well.

The walk proceeded up a spur, just north of the Steamers, which was very narrow in places with some interesting views both north and south. It was observed that the Blackboy Trees were mostly leaning north west. Lunch was had on the saddle on the Great Divide between Mt Steamer and Panorama Point, about 3km from the start. Peter Kerr and Narelle Crawford came along while we were having lunch. They had walked up a different spur, starting 2km before we did.

The return trip followed the same track as the ascent, except for some people who were led astray by some arrow signs attached to the trees. Fortunately they realised their error when they came to a steep section and found their way back.

Some birds seen on the outing included - Noisy miner, Magpie, Pied butcher bird, Bell bird, White cockatoo, Grey fantail, Black-faced cuckoo shrike and Lyrebird.

Thanks to Roger Logan for these outing notes.

A FEW NOTES ON BIRDS SEEN ON THE JUNE OUTING TO UPPER EMU CREEK

In regard to birds seen undoubtedly the "piece de resistance" for the day were the two sightings, both on the ascent and coming down, of a Paradise Rifle Bird (*Ptiloris paradisens*) in the same territory. They inhabit the highland rainforests of the Great Dividing Range. Of the three races, the Paradise Rifle Bird ventures further south in its range.

As we ascended we came to a narrow ridge track with one side which plunged deeply down to a rainforest filled valley. Catching our breath and quietly enjoying the scenery the peace was broken by the harsh rasping sound of "Y-a-a-as" frequently uttered. It was the call of a male Rifle Bird, which we may not have otherwise seen unless alerted. They were just fleeting glimpses in the thick rainforest trees. However, on the return journey, four members moving quietly had a great view of him. These birds have a distinctive strong curved bill. The velvet black plumage with tones of olive green are offset by iridescent flashes of turquoise. No female was seen, he seemed happy to disport himself for us.

The origin of the name Rifle Bird may be that the male's plumage suggested the colours of the uniforms of the Rifle Regiment in Britain in the 1820's. An unusual habit of these birds is to decorate the rim of their cup shaped nest with cast off snake skins.

Though the Lyre Bird remained hidden from our view we were rewarded by their wonderful repertoire, which is a feature of this time of year. There could be two heard deep down rainforest valleys - one towards The Steamers, the other on the opposite ridge valley while a third was on the ridge where we walked. Fresh scratchings were seen along the track with added ones seen as we returned. However, he remained at a respectable and hidden distance, as he treated us to a concert of bird calls. Our leader assured us they were Albert Lyre Birds. As we listened a couple of Grey Fantails flipped around us with the agility and grace of butterflies.

Jean Harslett.

Turtles or Tortoises ?

The specimens of baby turtles or tortoises which I took to the last Nats meeting caused a little debate regarding their correct title - turtle or tortoise. As I have always been confused, I have done a little research to find an answer.

Narelle offered to loan a book from the Australian Reptile Keeper Publications, for which I am very grateful, but first I checked my copy of *The Cold Blooded Australians* by Gunther Schmida. This book was published in 1985, and I purchased my copy from the author the night he gave the Nats a really wonderful programme on Australian Reptiles at a meeting in February 1987. In it the author refers to these creatures as tortoises - land and

freshwater animals with toed feet which are webbed, whereas turtles are said to be large marine creatures with flipper-like legs. In the back of his book is included a reference work titled *Tortoises of Australia* by J. Cann (1978).

Well that seemed to close the case for me, until I received the book from Narelle - *Keeping Short-necked Turtles* by Darren Green (2000). In it is included the same reference mentioned above, as well as another by the same author titled *Australian Freshwater Turtles*, published 1998. It appears that between these two dates, 1978 and 1998, there has been a change or perhaps a more positive definition of these animals, and they are now referred to as Turtles. Quoting from *Keeping Short-necked Turtles* by Darren Green - "Australian freshwater turtles are occasionally referred to as "tortoises" to distinguish them from the larger marine turtles. True tortoises are terrestrial, or land dwelling and only require water for drinking purposes. These land tortoises are not found in Australia. Our Australian turtles or "tortoises" need water to live in for their survival. The term "terrapin" describes the small freshwater turtles found overseas, this term is not usually used in Australia. Australia's turtles are either marine or freshwater dwelling and are grouped accordingly."

So from the above it seems that you can call them what you like, but they are actually turtles, and they belong to the family *Chelidae*. The common name for the newly hatched creatures which I took to the Nats meeting, is Eastern Long-necked Turtle, and scientific name - *Chelodina longicollis*.

Rob McCosker

The First Time is Always the Best

Do you remember the first time you may have been lucky enough to see a platypus, an echidna, a lyrebird, or some other difficult to see animal? I bet later sightings were probably never as exciting as the first.

As Narelle and I were driving past Carrs Lookout on the Kinnanes Falls pre-outing, we caught sight of a cat like animal loping up the road towards us. I was about to make a derogatory comment about cats when I realised I was about to insult a quoll - a spotted-tailed quoll to be exact. I hit the brakes as the animal pulled up alongside the Jackaroo. Narelle was out of the Jackaroo to grab her camera from the back, while I sat for a few seconds worrying about scaring it away. For a fleeting moment, the quoll stopped and looked me in the face. Together, it was a moment shared in time. And then, just as quickly, the quoll dashed up the slope and disappeared into the tangle of Kikuyu.

Narelle and I have collectively managed 50 years of bushwalking between us. Maybe we have just been unlucky, but neither of us had seen a quoll. For both of us, this was the first time. We may never be as excited again. One thing is for sure; the first time is definitely the best.

David Wilson

Weekday Outings

These will begin - my apologies for taking so long to get organised. The first outing will be a trial so I am planning an easy one.

We will meet at the Picnic Area at Girraween N.P. at 11.30am -12.00 noon on Friday 4th August. I hope for a really good day and suggest a BYO BBQ lunch. At 1.00pm or soon after we will take a walk down to the Junction. Some people may wish to come for the afternoon walk and not the lunch or vice-versa.

We can have some discussion about places, days and dates for weekday outings while we meet at Girraween, so please bring some ideas for places you'd like to take those of us who can go on these outings. If you are unable to come on this first outing, but are interested in coming on future ones please let me know. You can contact me on 4681 3074 before July 19th or after August 1st. (In between these dates I'm off to the Australian Naturalist Network Get-together in Alice Springs - tell you about it when I come home!) If you need transport please let me know also.

Desley McDonagh 4681 3074

FROM THE PRESIDENT

A MATTER OF SOME IMPORTANCE - PLEASE READ THIS
THOUGHTFULLY

From time to time we all need to be reminded of some practices necessary for club activities so that these can be interesting, stimulating and SAFE.

We are an incorporated club, but our incorporation is only valid if the following matters are kept in mind.

For outings we need to remember :-

When travelling in convoy, keep the vehicle behind you always in your sight. This should prevent drivers taking the wrong road and/or becoming lost.

Gates are to be left as they are found. The simple rule to follow is this - the people in the leading vehicle open the gate; the second vehicle drops aside, waits till all other vehicles are through, closes the gate and joins the end of the convoy. This prevents confusion as to whether the gate was open or closed.

READ THE PRE-OUTING NOTES IN YOUR NEWSLETTER!

Leaders take the time and trouble to do a pre-outing and write the notes which the editor prints for your information. We DO NOT ALWAYS depart for outings from the same place at the same time. (For example, Warwick members usually state a place in Warwick to meet.) There is generally a phone contact for the outing leader - if in doubt contact the leader or one of the office bearers.

Visitors are always very welcome at meetings and outings, BUT members and visitors are reminded that they MUST NOT put themselves or the club at risk by acting thoughtlessly and/or independently. I refer in particular to outings which are a GROUP activity under the leadership of one person or couple who take on that responsibility. Those who go on outings are reminded that, they must, at all times follow the guidance of the leader/s. As a club, we are privileged to go to many places on private property, which, as individuals, would not be open to us. AGAIN I MUST EMPHASISE, OUTINGS ARE GROUP ACTIVITIES!

I trust that members and their friends will understand the importance of this matter.

Thanks,
Desley McDonagh.

July Outing – Kinnanes Falls 23rd July 2000

Sorry folks - yet another early start for the Stanthorpe members. The Kinnanes Falls outing will start from the Spring Ck Road turnoff outside Killarney at 9:30am. The Spring Ck Road turns off the Killarney-Legume road. This meeting spot will cater for those who choose to come via Legume.

From here, we will drive the well-known route past Daggs Falls, Queen Mary Falls and into the Head Valley. Most of this road is now bitumen, with less than 5km of gravel remaining. We will descend through Teviot Gap to a parking spot at the bottom of the descent.

Kinnanes Falls is situated in a deep crevice, roughly located 2km northeast of Wilsons Peak. The falls can be reached easily in about an hour. The early part of the walk requires a very steep ascent of a grassy slope. An altitude of around 130m is gained in about 300m of walking! This section would probably be a grade 8. There is a well-defined footpad worn by previous walkers. Good views of Teviot Falls can be achieved during the ascent. At the top of the ascent, the track hugs the edge of an awesome, vertical cliff. The ledge the track follows is known as The Veranda. If you are at all spooked by heights, a short alternative route involving a little rock scrambling avoids The Veranda. The remainder of the walk to the falls is mostly level. (Grade 5)

The falls are situated in a deep cleft, midway along a massive cliff face. Good views of the falls are achieved, but recent rainfall could influence the display. The creek feeding the falls can be reached easily. If you wish to explore the top of the falls, swimming will be necessary! We will return by the same route.

The walk is not a long one. If there is time, we will walk to Browns Falls near Killarney. This is an easy 20min walk up a creek bed to the 15-20m high falls. There is a little rock hopping involved.

One final warning: bring your insect repellent. During the June pre-outing, Narelle collected two scrub ticks while I managed a PB of five!!!

David Wilson (4661 2839) (wildav@flexi.net.au)

Annual Meeting August 23rd 2000

Subscriptions are now due for 2000/2001

Family \$25.00 - Single \$15.00

Please complete your correct name and address details below and present with your subs. to the July or August Meeting, or post to -
Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc.
P O Box 154
Stanthorpe Q 4380

Name (Including title please) _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Payment enclosed \$ _____

Please Note - Receipts not collected at the meeting will be enclosed with your Newsletter.

Club Program Suggestions - 2000/2001

The committee once again asks for your assistance to provide a wide range of outing activities and meeting programs for the coming twelve months. Please jot down your suggestions below, and indicate if you would be prepared to lead an outing or provide a meeting program. All suggestions will be considered at a special committee meeting to be held shortly after the AGM.
