



The Granite Belt Naturalist



Mail Address: Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc, PO Box 154, Stanthorpe Qld. 4380

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



The Pyramids, Girraween National Park

The Club acknowledges the support of the Gambling Community Benefit Fund in the production of this Newsletter and the purchase of a data projector.

- 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 (Friday outings as pre-arranged)
- Subs:** Single \$15.00, Family \$25.00 per annum, July to June

Mail contributions: The Newsletter Editor, 374 Back Creek Road, Severnlea Qld. 4352.

Email: orana@halenet.com.au

CLUB OFFICE BEARERS – 2006/2007

President	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents	Michael Mueller	46811421
	Col Hockings	46811978
Secretary	Liz Bourne	46836374
Treasurer	Dave Bright	46811034
Newsletter Editor	Margaret Carnell	46835268
Magazine Committee	Wendy & Neil Donges	46812913
Publicity Officer	Janet Hockings	46811978
Librarian	Robin McCosker	46835371
Management Committee:	President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer	

**Deadline for next Newsletter:
12th March 2007**

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

Outing Sunday 25th February: Girraween Lodge to The Junction led by Rob McCosker

Next Meeting Wednesday 28th February: Flicka @ CWA by Michael Jeffries

Friday Outing March 2nd : Dave Bright

Identification of *Callistemon pungens*

I recently sent specimens of *Callistemon pungens* with a purple flower and the Happy Valley Bottlebrush to the herbarium in Brisbane who confirmed that they are the same species.

Margaret Carnell

Nats Outing February 25th - Girraween Lodge to the Junction

We will meet at Weeroona Park for the usual departure time of 9.00am and drive to Girraween Lodge. We will once again park at the "Girraween Hilton" which has some basic facilities including a bush dunny, and shelter, for an early morning tea before setting off to walk to the Junction and return to the cars for lunch. If there happens to be sufficient rain before the outing there will be the chance of a swim in the rock pools at the Junction so be prepared with togs, towel and of course drinking water in a back pack. At the present though, late January, Bald Rock creek is no more than a string of waterholes and what would have been a spectacular display of Flannel flowers is looking very dry and sad.

After lunch we will do another of the Girraween Lodge walks if time and enthusiasm permit. Most of the day will be on walking tracks except for a little gentle bush-bashing, about Grade 5 on our Nats Scale.

Leader Rob McCosker Phone 46835371

Agave

We have had two agave plants in the garden for many years, possibly 20 or more, and just before Christmas one decided to flower. I had seen these along the roadside occasionally but never took a lot notice, but when this "asparagus spear" appeared in our garden it was impossible to miss. We watched in fascination as this flower spike grew in a few weeks to a height of about 15m and about 30 flower branches up to 1m long each with a mass of buds which opened to a short tubular yellow flower, starting from the lowest and progressing to the top.



Co-incidentally Trish received a Gardening Magazine with an article about this plant, and how it attracted many birds. We soon found that out as one day as I walked past I counted 11 red wattle birds fly off and shortly after there were 6 Leatherheads as well. You can imagine the noise that wakes us up daily with that number of gregarious birds squabbling over the nectar filled flowers when so little else is available in the

drought. The nectar continually drips from the flowers forming small pools in the curved leaves at the bottom providing a ready food source for ants and bees. I discovered this one night when, for a family gathering, I placed a floodlight under the flower stem to make an excellent garden night feature. When I went to turn it off, the lamp was smoking as the nectar became caramelised on its glass surface! I did a little research and found that the nectar is used as a sugar replacement, it is three times sweeter than cane sugar, and in its native lands of Mexico, southern and central America and tropical South America the sap is collected and fermented and distilled to make an alcoholic drink, and apparently this should only be called Tequila if it comes from the Tequila Region of Mexico.

Our plants are *Agave americana* var. *marginata*, which are monocarpic, that is after they flower and set seed they die. They are commonly called Century plant as they take so long to flower and this time is determined by the moisture and nutrients available to the plant. Some plants produce numerous offsets from the base which are then ready to take the place of the parent plant when it dies, however some do not. We have one of each type, and of course the one which flowered is the solitary one with no offsets. No doubt some of the thousands of seeds now developing will be viable.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on Wednesday 22nd November, 2006

Opening: The meeting opened at 7.35pm, with president, Kris Carnell, welcoming members.

Attendance: There were 19 present at the meeting and 6 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 25th October 2006 were received with the following amendment - the parrot specimen brought to the last meeting by Rob McCosker was a red-winged parrot, not a red-necked and the honeyeater in his garden was a brown not a white-cheeked. The minutes were then accepted as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Rob McCosker, seconded by Michael Jefferies. Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

1. Wombat Survey

Liz said that the Qld Parks and Wildlife Service were again looking for volunteers to help with their next survey on 9 December. Mario, Peter Kerr and Col Hockings said they could be interested in attending.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

1. Stanthorpe Shire Council – invitation to meeting with consultants working on the Emu Swamp dam proposal
2. Chinchilla Field Nats. – *Urimbirra* – November 06
3. Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club – *Darling Downs Naturalist* – November 06
4. Qld. Field Naturalists Club – QNC News – November/December 06
5. Fassifern Field Naturalists – newsletter – November 06
6. Commonwealth Bank – alteration to deposit advice
7. Stanthorpe Shire Council - nominations for Australia Day awards
8. Stanthorpe Shire Council – invitation to Council's Christmas function on 6 December
9. Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Club – November newsletter
10. University of Qld Institute of Continuing Education – 2007 program
11. Canon Total Technology – invoice for \$11.44
12. CGU Insurance – public liability insurance
13. Lanikai Wildlife Refuge camping ground - brochure

This correspondence was accepted on the motion of Liz Bourne, seconded by Margaret Carnell. Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

1. Emu Swamp Dam Proposal

Liz Bourne, Kris Carnell and Col Hockings will attend the meeting with the consultants on behalf of the club.

2. Stanthorpe Council Christmas Function

Liz Bourne and Michael Jeffries will represent the club at this function.

3. Public Liability Policy

The notification from CGU did not indicate what the premium would be for 2007 but Dave Bright said he anticipated it to be about \$400. This needs to be paid in January. It was moved by Michael Jefferies, seconded by Millie Marsden that this account be paid when it arrives. Carried.

Financial Statement

The financial statement for November was tabled by the treasurer. No bank statement for November was available.

Financial Statement for the period from 25/10/06 to 23/11/06:

Cash book balance as at 25/10/06 1024.42

Receipts:

Subscriptions 50.00

Sale of wildflower books 60.00

110.00

Expenditure:

Newsletter postage 50.00

Room rent (2 months) 30.00

Photocopier charges 72.26

Photocopy paper 12.50

164.26

Cash book balance as at 23/11/06 970.16

Accounts for payment

Total Technology Centre 11.44

This financial report was received on the motion of Dave Bright, seconded by Errol Walker. Carried

Outing Reports:

1. Saturday outing – Broadwater State Forest – 28 October

An account of this outing was in the last newsletter.

2. Sunday 19 November – Blue Gorge Creek, Sundown National Park

Peter Haselgrove led this outing and 20 attended.

Pre-outing Reports:

1. Christmas Break-up party on 10 December

This will be at Mario Pennisi's place off Sugarloaf Road from 3.30pm for those who want a short walk or from 6pm for those just coming for the BBQ.

2. Friday Outing in February

The venue for this will be advised by the Carnells.

3. February outing – Girraween Environmental Lodge

This will be led by Rob McCosker. Details in the February newsletter.

4. February meeting

Michael Jeffries will be giving a talk on the use of "Flika" a web based public photo library.

Specimens:

1. Margaret Carnell had a bird's nest – maybe from a scarlet robin?

2. Kris tabled a fact sheet on the proposed Emu Swamp Dam

3. Rob McCosker said they had a grey fantail nesting in their liquid amber tree. Col Hockings reported regular visits to their yard by a rufous fantail.

The meeting closed at 8.17pm and was followed by a presentation from Errol Walker on a trip to Iceland.

Outing to Blue Gorge on Sunday 9th November, 2006

23 people met at Farnbro, adjacent to the park and then travelled into the park's western area. We had smoko alongside a patch of Mugga Ironbark and Yellow Box, which were in flower. Numerous honeyeaters were seen. We then drove along the fire break to Blue Gorge Creek. The group walked down the creek to the head of Blue Gorge for views into the gorge and then scrambled through some extremely thick scrub around the southern side for further views of the gorge and across into the

eastern side of the park. We returned to the cars for late lunch and then drove back out via the same route as in the morning.

Peter Haselgrove



Bird List Blue Gorge Outing

Compiled by Peter Haselgrove & Margaret Carnell

Fuscous honeyeater	Yellowfaced honeyeater	White plumed honeyeater
Striped honeyeater	Spiny cheeked honeyeater	Noisy/little friarbird
Yellow tufted honeyeater	Grey shrike thrush	Little eagle
Willy wagtail	Shrike tit (call)	Cicada bird (summer migrant)
Grey fantail	Striated pardalote	Leaden flycatcher
Mistletoe bird	Little lorikeet	Currawong
Tree creeper	Wren	Quail
Welcome swallow	Richard's pipit	Eastern rosella
Red wattle bird	Ibis	Black faced cuckoo shrike
Pee wee	Bronze wing pigeon	Yellow rumped thornbill
Crow	Noisy miner	Wedgetail eagle
Crested pigeon	Wood swallow kookaburra	Magpie

Flower List Blue Gorge Outing

Mugga iron bark (Eucalyptus sideroxolyn)	Cayley's iron bark (E cayleyi)	Silver leafed iron bark
Brown box	Yellow box (E mellidflora)	Peach bush
Dead finish (Cassinia)	Macrozamia sp	Dianella sp
Stypandra (not in flower)	Leucopogon	Isotoma
Hypoxis hygrometrica	Tree pear	Pelargonium
Bulbine lily	Rock isopogon	Maiden hair fern & others
Alphitonia excelsa (red oak or soap tree)	Dagger orchid (not in flower)	Lemon-scented tea tree L. petersonii