Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc. April 2008- Vol 397



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, 364 Back Creek Road, Severnlea Qld. 4352.

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CLUB OFFICE BEARERS - 2007/2008

President	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents	Michael Mueller	46811421
	Archie Cameron	46852347
Secretary	Liz Bourne	46836374
Assistant Secretary	Halina Kruger	46835206
Treasurer	Nanette Jurd	46837119
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

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 s
- 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

Deadline for next Newsletter: 5th May 2008

Coming Up

Outing: Sunday April 20th; Castle Rock, led by Nanette Jurd.

Next Meeting: Wednesday April 23rd; Safety in the Bush

Friday Outing: to be arranged.

CASTLE ROCK. Sunday 20th April

A climb to Castle Rock is well worth the visit as there are suburb panoramic views of Mt. Norman, The Sphinx & Turtle Rock, The Pyramids and the surrounding countryside.

The track leaves from the Castle Rock camping area and is a well graded walking track with gentle to moderate gradients until a steep climb over exposed rock at the end of the track to the summit.

It takes about an hour to reach the summit. After we have had a stroll around the summit, we will return to the junction of the track and walk up the track towards Mt. Norman for a bit over a kilometer across a little gully where we have our lunch.

A little further past this gully is a large slab of rock that can be explored at leisure. Here we can get different views of Mt. Norman and Castle Rock. We will return back to the car-park along the track the way we came.

We will meet in town at 9am and drive to Girraween via Storm King Dam instead of the highway. The cars will be parked at the Castle Rock Camp area, where we will have morning tea before the walk. Take lunch with you as we will have it along the way.

It was very windy on top of Castle Rock on the pre-outing and the wind was a little cool so appropriate outer wear would be advisable.

This is definitely a place at Girraween that is well worth a visit and you will not be disappointed with the views.

Hoping for a nice sunny day. Nanette Jurd

Wednesday outing to 'The Cascades', Girraween NP, 5th March

This was arranged at short notice to replace the one to Donnelly's Castle that was going to be led by Kris Carnell. Five of us met at the park and, as none of up knew the area Kris had proposed we decided to try the walk to the Cascades in Girraween National Park as none of us had done this one. We went to the parking area where the graded walks to Doctor Robert's waterhole and the Underground Creek begin and had morning tea.

The walk to the Cascades branches off to the right at the place where there is a sign to the waterhole about 500 m from the start; it looks a bit like a drain for water running off the path at that point but soon turns into a narrow track. This follows the right bank of Bald Rock Creek down a long rock slope to a point at which the creek drops across the rock face. Crossing the creek we picked up the track on the left bank and this continues to the west along the left bank of the creek, crossing a swampy point where the creek that drains the east flank of the Mt Norman ridge joins Bald Rock Creek. The rocky slopes, down which the creek cascades from pool to pool, are just beyond this point and the track fades out here with a good view of the eastern Pyramid across the valley.

We decided to bush-bash down the left side of the cascades through some large outcrops and steep drops until we came to a pool from which the creek apparently continued under a pile of large boulders covered in debris and tree trunks left by heavy rain at which point we returned.

There were few flowers out and we saw few birds most notable being several Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos. It was a pleasant walk in the park; Michael Jefferies.

Outing Report, M. Mitchell, Main Range NP, Sunday 16th March



We departed Stanthorpe 7am for the drive through to Bellbird Park at Cunningham's Gap for a 8.30am cuppa. 10 people braved the day. The twin peaks of Mt Mitchell look quite commanding coming from Warwick, and even more daunting from the East in the afternoon. We crossed the highway to begin our 10.2km return trip to the East peak of Mt Mitchell. On entering the forest we were welcomed by large Rose Maple, *Crytocarya patentineruis*, Hoop Pine, *Araucaria cunninghamii*, Flame Currajong, *Brachychiton aceifolium*. It

was like entering a secret garden with special places to investigate around every bend. The path was a steady incline and not very wide. Some large trees had come down in the recent strong winds and were over the track but otherwise the track was very well maintained. We proceeded in single file admiring the landscape and views.

The weather was very pleasant for walking, with many clouds but luckily for us no rain. Not far into the walk we left the highway noise and we were able to explore the area in peace and quiet. Almost from the beginning we had a room with a view, peaking out between the trees, toward Mt Edwards near Aratula and Lake Moogerah. Mount Courdeaux was ever changing as we meandered our way to the top. The walk took us through a very beautiful rainforest at the West peak with a great display of large spider webs and much lush greenery, the peacefulness as well as the coolness of the temperature made this area almost mystical. Being first up the mountain I was able clear the all the overnight fresh



cobwebs for the rest of the group. The wonderful rock formations and the arrangements of plants was a terrific experience. It seemed as though every few meters there was something different to see, the landscape changing all the time from open eucalypt forest to enchanting rainforest, to superb views all in a small space of time. There were so many different shapes of grass trees from tall to multi headed to just plain special. Many years pass before a trunk is formed and of course anything from are downer grass threated at the view. I did no

crooked radiating leaves.

Everyone with the group made it Mitchell (1168m), with much of discussion and identification photos were taken. Some had not were at when driving up from peak of Cunningham's Gap but back to the car park. The view

to the top of East peak of Mt appreciation of the view, and lots of the surrounding areas. Many realized exactly which peak we Brisbane to the parking area at the this was rectified when we got toward west towards Warwick

showed us the valley but this is not what you see when you drive along the road. The Valley is indeed further south over the hills onto a higher mountain range than we see on left driving towards Warwick. You are able to see so much more when you can get a bird's eye view of the area.

The top of the mountain was shared with two skinks warming up; *Egernia mcpheei*. These were right on edge of the East peak. Although there wasn't much space we all managed to check them out and



snap a photo. Unfortunately the fungi were a disappointment due to the dry spell, but there were remnants and photos from the preouting. Some members of the group did see a couple of different snakes, I saw one Python along the path that didn't mind a photo

shoot in the late afternoon. The goannas were not about as at the pre-outing I guess due to the cloudy weather.

The flora seen along the track was not spectacular as spring, but there was always something to see. Hyacinth Orchid, *Dipodium variegatum*, Golden Lily Bulbine bulbosa, Ivy-leaved Goodenia, *Goodenia hederacea*, Golden Everlasting, *Xerochrysum bracteatum*, Wild Raspberry, Climbing Gardenia plus many other plants.

The Bird list: Satin Bowerbird, *Ptilinorhynchus violaceus*, Pied Currawong, *Strepera graculina*, Bell Miner, *Manorina melanophrys*, Noisy Miner, *Manorina melancocephala*, Bassian Thrush, *Zoothera lunulate*, Australian Raven, *Corvus coronoides* plus many others. Among the insects was a mountain katydid (*Acripeza reticulata*) was seen on the way up and a number of butterflies had come out by the time we descended, including the introduced Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*, a sedge-skipper, *Hesperilla sp.*, a grass-yellow, *Eurema sp.*, the very widespread Meadow Argus, *Junonia villida*, and the Grey Ringlet, *Hypocysta pseudirius*.

By the time we got back to the cars the trip took about 5 hours with everyone safe and accounted for, eager for another cuppa and a safe journey home. A great day out. Halina Kruger

Post Campout Report - Bunya Mountains/Russell Park and Muntapa Tunnel

Birds singing, wallabies lazing, fresh air and bright skies greeted 9 Nats atop the Bunya Mountains for an energetic campout.

Our first walk took us to the highest point of the Bunya's Mt Kiangarow, for wonderful western views to Dalby, Chinchilla and beyond. Amongst the grass tree avenue we came across a small striped lizard, which some believe to be a juvenile blue tongue.

All were brave enough to venture into the darkness and with the help of spotlights we spied brushtailed possums, bats, spiders, large tadpoles and a lone tawny frogmouth. We were also fortunate to witness a whip snake(?) carefully manoeuvre itself off a bridge and out of harms way. Dandabah circuit took us past many scrub turkey mounds, some beautiful dripping waterfalls and Northern views to Torong and further. Our stop at Little Falls was interrupted by the approach of a red belly black making his way along the track to water. A Rufous fantail did a little song and dance for us above flowering cunjevoi and Nanette spotted a legless lizard on this track.

Event organisers were cursed on the STEEP morning walk DOWN to Cunjevoi falls in Russell Park. Few birds were spotted, however the highlight of this walk was being able to witness two wallabies fighting.

After some car shuffling we walked from Paradise to Westcott, where we spotted flowering Golden lilies, a Leucopogon, golden everlasting daises and an unidentified flowering tree that the bees adored. The cross –hatch form of a strangler fig intrigued all.

Koondaii Lookout Circuit provided good views to the west and a hot return walk for some.



Strangler Fig, Paradise-Westcott Muntapa Tunnel, 287m long

After packing up camp 4 adventurous souls headed down to Carbines Timber Chute in Russell Park before leaving the mountain for Muntapa Railway Tunnel near Cooyar. Many birds were spotted on the trip, along with a Blue Tongue Lizard and a Goanna. Armed with torches – we shared our walk though the tunnel with the resident Bent Winged Bat community before morning tea and heading our separate ways.



Bent Winged Bats in Muntapa Tunnel

A huge thank you to all that attended for making our few days away very enjoyable. Jenny, Andy and Curtis Cameron

Bunya Mountains Campout Bird List

Australian brush-turkey	Australian wood duck	Emerald ground-dove	
Straw-necked ibis	Nankeen kestrel	Bar-shouldered dove	
Wedge-tailed eagle	Brown cuckoo-dove	Wongi pigeon	
Southern boobook (heard)	Golden whistler	Topknot pigeon	
Tawny frogmouth	Rufous whistler	Crested pigeon	

Laughing kookaburra	Grey shrike-thrush	Common bronze-wing
White throated tree-creeper	Magpie-lark	Galah
Superb fairy-wren	Rufous fantail	Cockatiel
Yellow-throated scrubwren	Grey fantail	Australian king parrot
White-browed scrubwren	Willie wagtail	Crimson rosella
Noisy miner	Grey butcherbird	Red-rumped parrot
Lewin's honeyeater	Pied butcherbird	Shining bronze-cuckoo
Eastern spinebill	Australian magpie	White-winged chough
Eastern yellow robin	Pied currawong	Apostlebird
Eastern whipbird	Australian raven	Bassian thrush
Spotted quail-thrush	Torresian crow	Grey-crown babbler
Silvereye	Common starling	Green catbird
Common myna	House sparrow	Satin bowerbird
Red-browed finch	Double-bared finch	Mistletoe bird (heard)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St., Stanthorpe on Wednesday 26 March 2008

Opening: The meeting opened at 7.37pm with Rob McCosker standing in for the president, Kris Carnell, who was away. David Wilson, our guest presenter from Warwick, and his parents were welcomed to the meeting.

Attendance: There were 21 present at the meeting and 5 apologies as per the attendance book.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 27th February 08 were received as a correct record of the meeting on the motion of Halina Kruger, seconded by Errol Walker. *Carried*.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

1. Grant Application to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund

No notification has yet been received about our application for funding for a guide to the mammals of the Granite Belt.

Correspondence:

Inwards:

- 1. Chinchilla Field Nats. *Urimbirra* March 08
- 2. Stanthorpe Camera Club cheque for \$35 for half post box rental
- 3. International Park Tours IPT Traveller March 08
- 4. Society for Growing Aust Plants Warwick Branch March newsletter
- 5. Queensland Naturalists Club *QNC News* March/April
- 6. Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club Darling Downs Naturalist March 08
- 7. Commonwealth Bank statement for March

This correspondence was accepted on the motion of Michael Jefferies, seconded by Halina Kruger. Carried.

Financial Statement

In the absence of the treasurer, there was no financial statement presented. The March bank statement showed a balance of \$540.66.

Outing Reports:

1. Wednesday 5 March

This outing was to have gone to Donnelly's Castle but instead the group of 5 decided to go to The Cascades in Girraween National Park, off the track into Dr Robert's Waterhole. There were not many flowers about but the creek and rocks were very impressive, with lots of flood debris evident.

2. Outing to Mt Mitchell – 16 March

This outing was led by Halina Kruger, with 10 people attending. They walked up the track to East Peak and then went on to West Peak. Two large skinks were seen plus two snakes – a brown and a python.

Pre-outings:

1. Weekday

This is scheduled to be organised by Michael Mueller but no details have been received as Michael is currently away.

2. Castle Rock, Girraween National Park – Sunday 20 April

This is being organised by Nanette Jurd but no details are available.

3. Next program – 23 April

This is scheduled to be about bush skills with Col Hockings hoping to have someone from the SES coming along.

5. Campout at the Bunya Mountains – 31 March to 2 April

Members were asked to indicate how many might be attending so that Jenny and Andy Cameron could be informed.

6. Wombat Survey – Girraween National Park

Liz mentioned that the next wombat survey was likely to be on Saturday 17 May and that anyone interested in participating should contact her.

Specimens:

1. Rob McCosker had the bodies of three birds that had collided with his windows – a fire tailed finch, a yellow faced honeyeater and a fan tailed cuckoo.

He also mentioned that the yellow berries from the *Pittosporum phillyreoides* that he brought along to the last meeting have now opened up.

General Business:

1. Errol Walker said he had a friend with a complete collection of *Australian Geographic* magazines in very good condition who was wanting to sell them . (see For Sale below; Ed.)

The meeting closed at 7.55pm and was followed by a wonderful presentation from David Wilson on Kosciuszko National Park from photos taken over many visits he had made to the area, in many different seasons.

Editor's note: The following items are for the advice of members only and is not an official Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club notice.

FOR SALE A complete collection of Australian Geographics in mint condition with all maps. [90 magazines including No1.]

Contact Kel or Hanna Dominey on 4681 2811 or 0409 019 499. \$200.00 or near offer.

FOR SALE Computer, AMD32ghz processor; ASUS motherboard; Ubuntu software installed with complete suite of free software including word processing spreadsheet, email, web browser etc, self updating;160gb hdd, USB, Ethernet and firewire connections; 17in LCD monitor. \$450.00 as is. Contact Michael Jefferies 46812389.