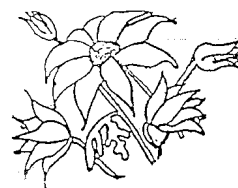




The Granite Belt Naturalist



Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc, PO Box 154, Stanthorpe Qld. 4380
WEB SITE: www.granitenet.com.au/groups/environment/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

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

WEB EDITION

If you have downloaded this from the web site and are not a member of the Stanthorpe Field Nats we would love to hear from you by email.
fieldnats@granitenet.com.au



The Pyramids Girraween National Park

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

CLUB OFFICE BEARERS - 2007/2008

President	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents	Michael Mueller	46811421
	Rob McCosker	46835371
Secretary	Halina Kruger	46835206
Treasurer	Nanette Jurd	46837119
Newsletter Editor	Michael Jefferies	46812389
Magazine Committee	Wendy & Neil Donges	46812913
Publicity Officer	Janet Hockings	46811978
Librarian	Trish McCosker	46835371
Management Committee:	President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer	

This document is on the website above for download. If there is anyone who would prefer to get their copy from the website, and save us postage, please email m.jefferies@gmail.com for inclusion on the email list. The website will have the document before it reaches you by post.

Photos by the report writers unless otherwise stated.

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



Deadline for next Newsletter:

1 June 2009

Coming Up

Outing; Sunday, 24th May, 2009. To the Lincoln Wreck, led by Helen Kruger

Monthly Meeting; Wednesday 27th May, 2009. To be announced; Narelle Crawford.

Friday Outing, June 5th . To be announced; Nanette Jurd.

Sunday 24th May: To the Lincoln Wreck

NOTE THE EARLY START: This is a brisk walk suitable for persons of a good level of fitness. The group will meet at Weeroona Park at 7am and drive to Emu Vale east of Warwick. The wreck is some 80m below the summit of Mt Superbus South. If you have a copy of "Take a Walk in South-East Queensland" by J & L Daly it is on page 265. There is a web site describing the events causing the crash of the aeroplane at <http://home.st.net.au/~dunn/ozcrashes/superbus.htm>.

Outing Report: Nundubbermere Falls 19th April 2009

It was a glorious autumn morning when 9 Nats left Weeroona Park to travel west along Nundubbermere Road to Falls Road where we met up with three more members. It was good to have Sue and Michael with us after quite a break. As we left Stanthorpe, two Wedgetail Eagles were gliding above Mt Banca.

It was an interesting drive and once we went into the Traprock country we saw several Richard's Pipits, as well as Crested Pigeons, Noisy Miners and Masked Lapwings. A small flock of Red Backed Parrots was disturbed by our passing. When we had passed through the third gate we stopped to look at the hand tied thirteen wire fence that was erected in the 1800s. All the posts and droppers were hand drilled and it was hard to imagine digging post holes in that rocky ground.

Photo: Peter Andrewatha. Panorama of the Falls.



After the obligatory cuppa we looked across to the red cliffs on the other side of the river and all scrambled to the bottom of the cliff to have a look at the falls from the bottom and take photos of the beautiful water hole. There was a red callistemon in bloom amongst the rocks.



The river bed is very rocky, so we had to do some rock-hopping to cross to the other side and make our way down stream. We stopped to look at several ledges where birds had been nesting, by the look of the guano on the rocks. Most people climbed up to have a look at the holes (caves) in the rock face and decided they were natural. Obviously we were not the first to do so, as Lester found a bottle in one of them.

Photo: Peter Andrewatha. Looking out of the cave.

The walking was easier from there, beside some lovely waterholes where there were red and blue dragonflies skimming the water. One red female was dipping into the water laying eggs. We stopped for lunch under some river oaks and watched a yellow-faced honeyeater and an

Australian Admiral butterfly. While we were taking it easy a group of twenty or so back packers passed on a hike along the river and up to the top of the cliffs before returning to the car park. One of them was carrying a sheep skull, decorated with leaves, on a stick, which caused a great deal of amusement.



On the way back we did a detour up Monday Creek, which had a little water in it. We left the back packs below the falls and all climbed above them and walked upstream on the slabs of rock that form the creek bed. A few of us decided it would be easier to walk up the slope from Monday Creek rather than to go back the way we came. The others had to go back to pick up the packs and took seventeen minutes longer to reach the cars. After another cuppa Lester and Halina showed us the track to a lookout above Nundubbermere Falls with spectacular views up and downstream. The wind was blowing a gale down the gorge, although it was quite calm a few metres back from the edge. By this time, the backpackers had reached the falls and were swimming in the waterhole.

We travelled in convoy along Bendee Lane to the Springdale Road and then to the Inglewood Road from where we made our separate ways home. All in all it was a very satisfactory outing.

Bird List Nundubbermere Falls Outing: Wedgetail Eagle, peewee, Richard's Pipit, crested pigeon, noisy miner, magpie, masked lapwing, nankeen kestrel, red backed parrot, yellow-rumped thornbill, welcome swallow, crow, white throated tree creeper, grey fantail, superb blue wren, shag, yellow-faced honeyeater, grebe, galah, ibis.

Margaret Carnell

Arcadia Valley Campout Report

Eight members took part in the campout from 23rd to 27th April. After leaving at different times and travelling via different routes, we met up at Surat. Trish and I camped in the local Caravan Park while the others made use of the free camping area about 1km from town. While there we took the opportunity to visit the museum with its huge "Window on the Balonne" fish tank displaying all the fish species to be found in the river. The original Cobb & Co coach, also housed there, was under repair and looked very sad without its wheels. The photographic display in the adjoining Art Gallery was spectacular with several works by Jenny Cameron's mum, including one of Jenny's children, Curtis and Lucy. Jenny and Andrew had been commissioned to design, build and install new gates for the Surat cemetery so we set off to inspect their handiwork, and were very impressed. Made entirely of steel the gates resemble a frame of white gum branches supporting large gum leaves. Trish and I strolled along the town's new walkway beside the river and tried out some of the exercise machines installed along the way. Each had simple instructions on how to use them and there were also swings and a climbing wall for children

Next morning after viewing the foot bridge attached to the road bridge across the Balonne River, we decided that the design would be quite suitable for our own Carnarvon bridge. We then set off for Beranga Creek, renowned for its water lilies, but the few there hadn't opened, so on to Roma for morning tea at the "Big Rig" with all the resident ducks and geese looking on. Next stop was Injune with its brand new (opened the night before) Information Centre, and Art Gallery/Museum, then on to the lookout atop the range in Lonesome NP for lunch. The lookout provides wonderful views down into the Arcadia Valley and across to the sandstone cliffs on both sides. We watched a wedge tailed eagle riding the air currents and had our first sight of the unusual, for us, Bancrofts wattle with its white trunk and large grey leaves.



As we drove down through the cuttings of the range to the valley floor we saw a rock python sunning itself on the road. Our destination was the Arcadia Valley Escape, which is operated by Rowan Peart, who with his parents also run the property "Sunnyholt" across the road. We arrived at our campsite at about 3.00pm and after setting up, as there were only 8 of us, drove in two vehicles, (thanks to Kris and Lester), across to look at the two ponded pasture paddocks. These have been constructed with levee banks to catch overflow from the Brown River and consequently hold a vast area of shallow water with a lush growth of pasture grass around the edges. This grass will grow up to 1m high in water up to 1m deep and as well as feeding cattle provides a wonderful habitat for wildlife. From the bird hide on this

lake we saw black swans, egrets, cormorants, ibis, grebes and whistling kites to name a few. The setting was quite remarkable, some called it "Picture Postcard", with the perfectly still water reflecting the birds and trees, the soft green buffel grass running up the slopes to the bush on the hills in the distance, crowned by Castle Hill and the sandstone peaks of the Expedition Range all bathed in the late afternoon light. We dragged ourselves away from this idyllic spot to return to camp, looking in at the Tree-house bird hide on the way. A group of plains turkeys were seen on the way back also.

Day 3 was a very early start - on the road by 6.00am - to be at Lake Nuga Nuga by 7.00am to watch the colour of the lake change as the sunlight opened the waterlilies, so we were told. Well it didn't turn out that well, as the location I picked near Mt Warrinilla probably wasn't the best and the process of watching flowers open takes quite a long time. We were rewarded with wonderful lighting on the tree trunks and the reflections as well as the numbers and antics of the birdlife. A short drive to the peninsula gave us a different aspect on the lake and after smoko most went for a scramble up the slopes of the mountain for better views over the lake. By the time we left to return to camp the water lilies were at their best with colours ranging from white to deep blue. After lunch we set off in the vehicles again to explore the property track shown on the Arcadia Valley Escape mud map. Although the map showed 10 gates, half had been replaced by a lane and grids constructed by Santos mining company to access drilling sites for gas exploration. We saw two such capped bore holes and some time in the future there will be a pipe line to connect them to a major gas supply pipe. Properties like this adjacent to the National Park are valued by mining companies because they can access the gas field of the Surat Basin by boring at an angle beneath the Park from outside its boundary. We stopped along the way to climb the Munroe Lookout, then on to look at Barra Dam before having smoko at the gas rig camp site. Back at camp we discovered that crustaceans were off the menu for dinner as the crab pots only yielded a couple of small turtles when lifted from the dam nearby.

Next day, day 4, we were all ready for the big 12k walk but first we were invited to watch Rowan move the cattle to another paddock. He explained that the property has a cell grazing system to keep feed at an optimum level so that the cattle have an average 0.9kg weight gain per day. Regular feed audits are done to ensure that the 2500 cattle maintain the weight gain and paddocks are not overgrazed. Substantial plantings of leuceana, a high protein legume, supplement the buffel grass planted throughout the property. We then drove to the start of the walking track for smoko. The track climbs to the top of the Expedition Range so is quite steep in places and as it was recently done up with a bulldozer was also covered in small stones and was slippery. Rowan provided us with another mud map pointing out things of interest, such as a chain found when the road was first put in, left presumably by timber getters with a bullock team. He also showed us a flat stone used by aborigines to grind grain. Vegetation changed as we went along and trees of note were the Bancroft Wattle, *Acacia bancroftii*, lining both sides in places with some in flower, Budgeroo, *Lysicarpus angustifolius*, a hairy barked tree valued as post timber with its extremely tough wood, and Hairy Oak, *Allocasuarina inophloia*, prized for wood turning with its tough red flecked timber.

The track runs close to some sandstone sentinels one of which, The Pinnacle, marks the back boundary of the property. Although the day was hot some of us were enticed to climb part way up some of these peaks and were rewarded with views down into the valley to the west and across to the sheer cliffs of the range to the east. Some 20km further east in a straight line is the Robinson Gorge section of the Expedition NP.



We stopped in a cool deep gully for lunch then continued along the track which seemed to go on forever, passing through more stands of Budgeroo and Hairy Oak until finally reaching the cairn of rocks marking the detour to a cave painting site. Rowan had told us a little about the stenciled artwork so it had a lot more meaning for us. A couple more kilometers mostly steep down hill, or jump down on the mud map, had us back to the cars. We decided to return to camp to finish the day with a get together in the shade on the front lawn of the cottage.

Monday morning saw some of us pack up to return home, while others moved on to further destinations, and some stayed on for another night so they could pay a brief visit to Carnarvon NP seeing they were so near. Overall I think it was a very good outing with a superb venue and perfect weather.

Rob McCosker Leader.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc; Wednesday 22 April 2009

Meeting opened: 7:40 pm

Attendance: 11 Apologies 3 as per attendance book

Minutes of the previous meeting:

Confirmed by M Jefferies seconded by R McCosker **carried**

Business arising from the minutes: nil

Correspondence:

1. Chinchilla Field Nats - Newsletter
2. Society for Growing Aust Plants – Warwick Newsletter
3. Fassifern Field Nats
4. Darling Downs Field Nats
5. Environmental Protection Agency – South West Qld

Correspondence accepted on the motion of Halina Kruger seconded M Carnell Carried

Financial Report: see below

Outing Reports:

Mid week outing cancelled due to rain.

Weekend Outing Kris and Margaret Carnell to Nundubbermere Falls

Pre-outings:

Week day outing: K Carnell to lead group to the Underground River.

Weekend outing: Lincoln Wreck. Leave Stanthorpe 7.00am for an early start to Emu Vale to climb up to the Lincoln Wreck. Details above and on web site.

Specimens/ Items of interest: Photo of Little Eagle over Mt. Marlay by M Jefferies

General Business:

Campout to Arcadia Valley discussed, camp at Surat overnight before going into the Valley.

Meeting closed; 8.02pm

Next Meeting: 27th May 2009

Presentation by Rob McCosker "This side of the Black Stump". A small glimpse of some of the area we will be visiting at the Arcadia Valley as well as other NP visited a 3 week journey around the area.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT for April from 25 /03 /09 to 22 /04/ 09

Cash Book balance as at 25 /03 / 09 \$423.20

Receipts:-

Subscriptions	\$	
Room rent collection	\$	
Wildflower books	\$	
Interest	\$	
PO Box....	\$37.50	
		\$37.50

Expenditure:-

Magazine postage	\$	
Photocopier	\$ 27.50	
Room Rent	\$	
		\$27.50

CASH BOOK BALANCE AS AT 22 / 03 / 09 \$...433.20

Bank reconciliation No bank statement; not reconciled

Accounts for payment:- NIL

Proposed by: Nanette Jurd

Seconded by: Peter Andrewartha

Members Notes

Morning Delight

Some early-birds may already have noticed the very bright object in the east, best seen at dawn. That's Venus. No other planet can get so bright. Being closer to the Sun than we are (Earth 150m km, Venus 100m km), our sister planet on its 225 (earth) day long journey around the Sun overtook the Earth a month ago, moving away from the Sun's glare into the early morning night sky and it now at its brightest. Now quickly moving away from us, its diameter will shrink noticeably, however its brightness hardly diminishes because a greater part of the surface will appear illuminated as Venus gradually moves behind the Sun.

Michael Mueller

TO A GOOD HOME: Encyclopedia Britannica, full set complete, 1962. FREE!! *Michael Mueller*