Monthly Newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc. April 2011 – Vol 427

The Granite Belt Naturalist

Stanthorpe Field Naturalists 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. Encourage a spirit of protection towards native birds, animals and plants
4. Assist, where possible, in scientific research
5. Publish a monthly newsletter for the information of 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, (Friday outings as pre-arranged).

NOTE; the latest status of any outing is posted to the FieldNats web site as soon as possible.

The Pyramids

WEB EDITION

If you have downloaded this from our web site but are not a member of the Stanthorpe Field Nats please let us know by email to fieldnats@granitenet.com.au, so that we can see how well used the newsletter is. Thank you.

CLUB OFFICE BEARERS – 2009/2010

President:	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents :	Rob McCosker	46835371
	Michael Mueller	46811421
Secretary:	Halina Kruger	46835206
Treasurer:	Carol Smallwood	46811034
Newsletter Editor:	Michael Jefferies;	46812389
Magazine Cmtee:	W & N Donges	46812913
Publicity Officer:	Janet Hockings	46811978
Librarian:	Trish McCosker	46835371

Management Committee: President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer.

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

COMING UP

24th April; Browns and Queen Mary Falls - Carol Smallwood.

6th May; TBA at monthly meeting.

Deadline for next newsletter:

2nd May 2011

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.

This document is on the website above for download. If there is anyone who would prefer to get their copy on-line, please email fieldnats@granitenet.com.au for inclusion on the email newsletter list. This will ensure you have the document as soon as it is finished and before it reaches you by post.

Pre-outing Reports

Sunday, 24th April (Easter Sunday): Queen Mary Falls.

Meet 9.00am Weeroona Park or 10.30 at the parking area of Brown's Falls, the falls below Queen Mary Falls. We will have morning tea at Brown's Falls before moving onto Queen Mary Falls and doing the walks before lunch.

Queen Mary Falls are located 53 km east of Warwick on Spring Creek road and are part of the Main Range National Park. They are located on Spring Creek, a tributary of the Condamine River, and have a drop of 40 metres, and are surrounded by rainforest. There are two walks at Queen Mary Falls; a cliff walk of 400 metres to the top of the falls and a circuit walk of 2km through the forest. Both are easy walks. Facilities in the park include toilets, picnic tables, barbecues (bring your own fire wood), and walking trails. Water should be boiled if using park water. Nearby is a private camping area with cafe and kiosk.

Distance from Stanthorpe is 100km, approximately 1hr 30 minutes driving time. I will check the weather situation at the Falls if it is raining here in Stanthorpe on the day, and you can ring me on 4611034 to check if the walk will go ahead. *Carol Smallwood.*

Friday 6th May 2011, to be announced

Outing Reports

Outing 4th March 2011

Due to the generally inclement weather, intermittent rain in town, there were no attendees at the *Hills'* walk around Sugarloaf Hill.

Outing - 20th March 2011

Because of the rain, the outing to the remains of the Mineral Creek Railway Bridge and Connolly Dam was cancelled. We hope to re-schedule it for a later date. *Kris & Margaret Carnell*.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc. Held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria St, Stanthorpe on Wednesday 23rd March 2011

Meeting opened: **7:35pm**

Attendance: 16 Apologies 1 as per attendance book

Minutes of the previous meeting: moved M Marsden seconded C Smallwood **carried**

Business arising from the minutes: **nil**

Correspondence:
as the Secretary was absent there was no correspondence.

Financial Report:
Financial Statement. Cash Book Balance as at 23/3/2011 $770.30

Receipts; Nil

Expenditure;
Stamps; $24.00
Room Rent $50.00
Total $74.00

Cash Book Balance end March 2011 $696.30

C Smallwood moved that the financial report be accepted; seconded R McCosker carried

Outing Reports:

Weekday outing: No attendees at the Sugarloaf hill walk due to the weather.
Weekend outing: The outing to the Mineral railway and Connolly Dam was cancelled due to the weather

Pre-outings:

Week day outing: 1st April M Jefferies The Junction Track, Girraween National Park .
Weekend outing: 24th April C Smallwood Browns and Queen Mary's Falls.

General Business:

Errol Walker asked if there had been any contact from the organisers of a Bush Walking Club in Warwick. There hadn't and the meeting decided to obtain more information about the group if possible.

Michael Jefferies suggested that the magazines received from other clubs in an electronic form be placed on the club website. Agreed

Next Meeting 27th April 2011 Program by Brian and Narelle Hill
Meeting closed : 7.50 pm

Presentation: Robin McCosker showed splendid pictures of a trip he and Trish took between Stanthorpe and Karijini National Park, W.A. in August 2010; and with more to come!

Moth – *Scioglyptis lyciaria*

Early one morning I found this beautifully marked moth on the screen door at the front of the house. I sent a photo to Michael Jefferies who put it on Flickr for identification and soon had a name for it (see the page here for this picture on Flickr). According to Wikipedia, *Scioglyptis lyciaria* is a species in the family Geometridae, the larvae of which feed on *Acacia mearnsii, Persoonia falcata, Exocarpus cupressiformis* and *Eucalyptus.* We have plenty of Eucalypts close by, as well as Native Cherry (*Exocarpus cupressiformis*), so I'm keeping my eye out for caterpillars.

Quoting from Wikipedia: *"The larvae grows to around 50mm and has a twig like appearance being mostly brown with small knob like red horns. The head is slightly higher than the rest of the body to form two forward pointing knobs. Eggs are laid in the crevices of the host plant in April. The egg colouration differs between females, when first laid they are closer to cream but as they age they go through yellows, greens and later browns. They are oval and have microscopic crenelated ribs. The larvae then feed for two to three months before pupating in a soil cell. After two months of staying in this soil chamber the adult will emerge."*

I have seen such caterpillars on Eucalypts but had no idea what they turned into. *Margaret Carnell*

Spider parasite.

One thinks of spiders as being predators of insects but there are insects that prey on and parasitise spiders. The picture on the left was taken by Rob McCosker as we were having lunch at 'The Sphinx' during the outing on the 20th of February. This is also on Flickr but spiders are not easy to identify from pictures nor is the larva. However it seems that the larva is an ectoparasite of spiders from the wasp family Ichneumonidae and the spider is an *Araneus* or orb-weaving spider. I did find a similar picture on an American web-site here. (Sorry to those not on-line! Ed.)
The interesting thing is that the larva, when it is nearly full grown can make the spider move to a sheltered location, spin a web and provide the larva with protection before the larva sucks the remaining juice from the spider. *Michael Jefferies*

Encyclopedia of Life and The Atlas of Living Australia

As many of you know the 'Web' is becoming a major source of information on plants and animals; the articles above are good examples of how you can find such information which is of local and immediate interest. However such information is rather fragmented and efforts are being made in the scientific community to tap into the enormous amount of pictorial information that is collecting in pictures that people take and to tap the pool of knowledge that 'amateurs' have.

Some of the issues and efforts to collate and collect this information is being done on two sites of interest to us all, (well I think so!), the Encyclopedia of Life (EOL) at http://www.eol.org/ and The Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) at http://www.ala.org.au/

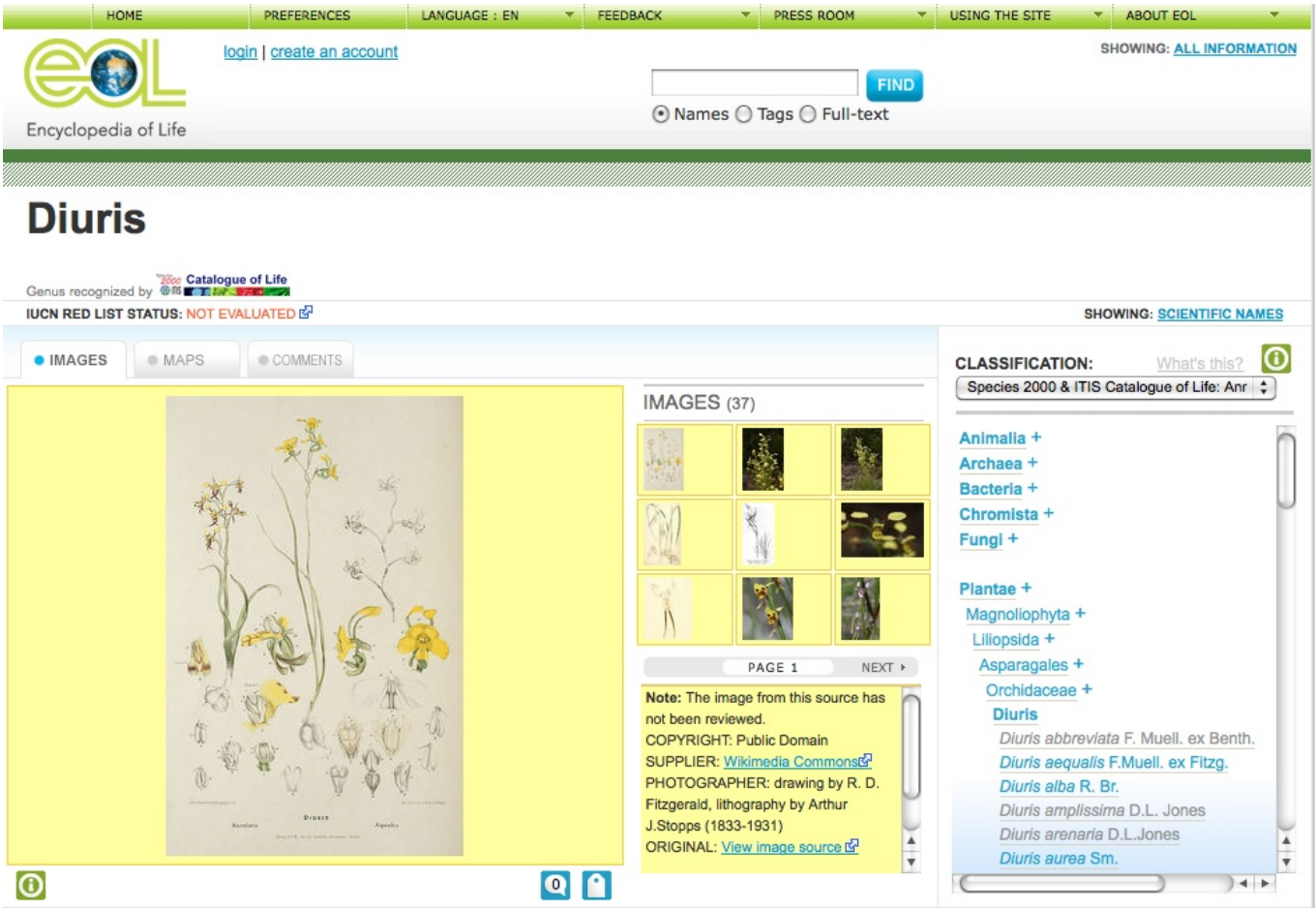
EOL says "EOL is an unprecedented global partnership between the scientific community and the general public. Our goal is to make freely available to anyone knowledge about all the world's organisms. Anybody can register as an EOL member and add text, images, videos, comments or tags to EOL pages. Expert curators ensure quality of the core collection by authenticating materials submitted by diverse projects and individual contributors. Together we can make EOL the best, most comprehensive source for biodiversity information."

ALA says "ALA project is building a biodiversity information platform to provide scientists and others with the information they need now and in decades to come. To achieve this, the ALA and its partners are making a wide range of biodiversity data and datasets more accessible and useable online through the ALA website, and developing new tools for research and analysis. Already, users of the ALA website can combine species distribution information with mapping tools, identification keys, photos, names lists, sensitive data service (coming) and published literature. They can create a list and/or map of the species living in a particular area, such as within 5 kms of their home. And there's more… Users can assist researchers and help to build a better picture of Australia's biodiversity and biosecurity by adding photos and sightings of animals and plants to the ALA website."

Note that these is only part of the suite of on-line resources involved. There are sites similar to ALA for other countries and also for specific groups such as PlantNet for NSW flora.
One of the major problems associated with the project is the identity of the organism. Another is to ensure the organism is described in a way that is uniform throughout the world. While the basics are there under the universally used binomial system that Linnaeus popularised from 1735 onward (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological_classification) problems arise with the higher groupings and the lower ones. The botanists have particular problems with the use of sub-species, varieties, cultivars and so on. However there are international groups working on this.

To go back to a more practical level both the EOL and ALA are seeking input from everyone. You may not think you can, but if I can you can! I suggest you look at both sites and try a bit of searching. EOL is the easiest and, in deference to the plant enthusiasts in the Field Nats I'll suggest an example that give an insight as to how important contributions are.

First go to EOL http://www.eol.org/ and enter *Diuris* in the search box. You will see a list of links to pages where the word has been used. I suggest scrolling down a bit to the 'Scientific names search results' list and click on the *Diuris* link in blue in the Asparagales Orchidaceae line second down. This will take you to the *Diuris* page. On the right hand side is a box headed 'Classification'. You will get a list of *Diuris* species which you can scroll through using the scroll bars on the side of the list.



The picture above show the *Diuris* page but not in its full glory!
If you go down to *D. parvipetala* you will see the link is blue which means that there is information on this page, two photos on my Flickr photo collection that are linked to the EOL collection of this species. You can search for scientific and common names, but the scientific is more useful! Remember the nomenclature for some groups is disputed; one finds pages such as *Boronia* with only one species! However this doesn't matter, the photo is stored with the name you gave it for later sorting!

Space prevents me from explaining further how they got there and what else one can do to help these projects with information about our local plants and animals to a world wide audience. And that is without even talking about the ALA at all! This is another project entirely even though they are linked. Perhaps a subject for a meeting?

I am more than willing to help others contribute if you are interested! *Michael Jefferies*

Editor Notes.

Remember contributions are welcome - though when they will appear depends on the space available as I try to keep the newsletter to 6 pages for cost reasons. I am most grateful to those who send contributions in Rich Text Format as it is easier to process into a uniform style. I am also following scientific convention where possible in putting *scientific names* in italics, it is much appreciated where this is done with the report and you know who you are!

Pictures as .jpg about 80kb are fine too. If you wish to know more about word processing, file formats and photos don't forget you can get lessons at GraniteNet (wearing my other hat;-)