

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
STANTHORPE FIELD NATURALIST CLUB

P.O. BOX 154
STANTHORPE, Q., 4380.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 1979-1980

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MEETINGS - 4th WEDNESDAY of each MONTH at C.W.A. ROOMS at 8 P.M.

OUTINGS - Each SUNDAY PRECEDING the FOURTH WEDNESDAY of the Month.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

SINGLE - \$4.00

FAMILY - \$6.00

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.

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Minutes of the General Meeting held Wednesday August 22nd, 1979.

Opening time - 8.25 p.m. Present 12, apologies 11.

Presidents Opening Remarks: The President welcomed those present. Had hoped for a larger attendance but realised many were on holidays during the School Holiday Period.

Apologies - as entered in Attendance Book. Moved by Mr. T. Archer and seconded by Mrs. J. Harslett that apologies be accepted. Carried.

Minutes of General Meeting held Wednesday, July 25th, 1979. Moved by Mrs. J. Stevenson and seconded by Mr. Tom Dunne that the Minutes "Taken as Read" in the Newsletter be confirmed. Carried.

Inward Correspondence:- Letter from Olivia Ortini, St. Joseph's High School requesting list of 10-15 places of Photographic interest in the Granite Belt for school project.

Newsletters from:- The Conservation & Bush Rescue Association; Richmond Valley Naturalists' Club; Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club; July & August; National Parks Association of Queensland; Habitat Magazine.

Press Statements: from Minister for Culture; National Parks & Wild Life Service re Kangaroo shooting and Dinosaur footprints.

Outward Correspondence: Letter to National Parks & Wild Life Service requesting more information re submissions for Girraween/Sundown National Parks; 2 letters to S.G.A.P. and Australian Heritage Festival advising we will be supplying wild-flower specimens again this year; Letter to Mr. Arthur Baker thanking him for Auditing our Financial records; Letter to radio station 4 QS for advertising our August Outing and meeting; Letter to Mr. John Henley inviting him to lecture on Astronomy at our October meeting; Card to Mrs. Goebel in hospital.

Moved by Mr. D. Pfrunder and seconded by Mr. J. O'Donnel that the Inward correspondence be received and the Outward adopted. Carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT : Mrs. Archer presented the financial statement which showed a credit balance of \$97.66. Mrs. Archer moved that the report be adopted and Accounts to C.W.A. for \$5.00 and August Postage re Magazine for \$7.21 be passed for payment. Seconded by Mrs. M. Prentice and Carried.

September Outing -

Date - September 23rd, 1979, Location - Wattle Ridge Leader - Mr. Robin McCosker.
Departure Time - 9.30 A.M. from Weeroona Park.

Next Meeting - Wednesday, Sept. 26th. C.W.A. Rooms 8 P.M.

After Meeting Programme: Guest Speaker - Miss D. McDonagh
Subject - Slides on Near East.

General Business - Any flowers for S.G.A.P. to be left at Health Food Store on Thursday, Sept. 6th.

Discussion on submission to National Parks & Wild Life Service re Sundown/Girraween National Park. Final suggestions made for submission The Submission to be published in full in the Newsletter.

Closure 9 p.m. After Meeting Programme: "Tea Tree to Tin Village" presented by Mrs. J. Harslett featuring slides of various species of Tea Tree of the Stanthorpe District and fascinating historical photographs developed from old photographic plates.

September, 1979.

The following is the submission sent to -

The Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service,
P.O. Box 190, Brisbane, North Quay, Q.4000.

Dear Sir, re Girraween/Sundown National Parks Management Plan.

The Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club respectfully makes the following submissions:-

Area 1. New acquisitions in South Bald Rock area.

1. When possible (and preferably as soon as possible) establish an area where people may camp (by permit only) in the Race Course Creek area. (on the Wallangarra - Mt. Norman - Wyberba road) also not have road right to base of South Bald Rock at this stage.
2. Have walking tracks and marked tracks from this point to South Bald Rock, and ~~West~~ Bald Rock, and other features of interest. Tracks of fairly high priority (even if not very "finished") - but high priority as it keeps people where you want them.
3. The Tick Fence could possibly be used as an access road if required, and also a method of entry from Bald Rock on the N.S.W. side - where a road goes to the base of Bald Rock (picnic and camping area).

Area 2. Horan's Gorge:

1. Establish a Picnic Area (not camping.) at the Western entrance to it and allow people to walk more or less freely through the valley. It would be good to have a track through when possible.

Area 3. Sundown Area:

1. Try not to have a road right through until it is possible to have a resident Ranger. Then it should be excellent to have the road as the areas would still require fair effort to investigate and this would keep the area more or less a "Wilderness Area".
2. The question of goat population:
It was decided reliable shooters (under permit only) could go in at nominated times.
(It is acknowledged that a few do this now, and some come from quite far afield for a short period each year.)
3. The question of fishing: It was hoped that a permit would be given but with these suggestions:-

Strong representation was made for the Complete Banning of "Bait" Fishing, but to allow "Artificial Lure" The reasoning being that Cod breed well in the area with its deep isolated holes - even if you wish to put back small fish, the damage with bait and hook is so great that they do not survive. This was not the case with artificial lures. Also Cat fish are not caught on artificial lures - thus breed up and are possibly the best source of food the Cod have. Consideration could also be given to closing the fishing season during the breeding period. (The local Fishing Club is very willing to restock the area with Cod again if they had some form of assurance that it would not be abused as it has been.)

BIRD OF THE MONTH - from Blue Gorge Outing. by Tom Chapman.

Wedge-tailed Eagle - *Aquila audax* (aquila - eagle and audax - bold

The weather was a typical cool clear winters day, the area beautifully wild, the company was of the best and to make it really complete 6 Wedge-tailed Eagles circled above the Gorge.

Surely no bird could be more appropriate for the Bird of the Month than the majestic Wedge-tailed Eagle and certainly there could be no more appropriate place to watch and admire them.

With its very definite wedge-shaped tail as seen when the bird is overhead or the characteristic turned-up wing tip when seen in plane of flight, this bird can readily be identified at much greater distances than any other birds. Add to this its size (fourth largest Eagle in the world with a wing span of up to 11 ft.) and very dark colouring (almost black in older birds) and even the most casually-interested observer can recognise a Wedge-tailed Eagle.

I remember some years ago, seeing dozens of these beautiful birds pegged out along a fence, obviously shot and displayed as a warning to any Eagles to keep well away or suffer the same fate. Great and wonderful are some of the tales attributed to the Wedge-tailed Eagle such as hunting in formation to kill thousands of lambs or even carrying off full grown sheep and the immediate reaction of many graziers was to reach for a rifle at first sight. Fortunately they are now losing that reputation as lamb killers and being appreciated for their service as eaters of rabbits which together with marsupials, reptiles and birds supply the bulk of their food.

In Southern Australia (where technically we are situated) they breed in June to August, building a very large platform of sticks in an inaccessible tree fork. This so-called nest is lined with bark and leaves. When the young are in the nest, house cleaning is meticulously carried out with debris thrown out and fresh green leaves substituted. On Keith Kerr's property at Kogan a pair of Wedge-tailed, presumably the same birds, return every year to a nest constructed in the top of a large spotted gum growing in a flat below a ridge which made possible good viewing with binoculars but close approach quite impossible. We often observed young eagles in this nest, sometimes one and sometimes two and the debris way down below was a true record of their diet, in their case mainly kangaroos.

The female, which is larger than the male, lays two, occasionally three light coloured blotched eggs. Both birds share incubation and feeding of the chicks and certainly defence of the nest if necessary.

While the Wedge-tailed Eagles at Blue Gorge circled, glided and climbed, as always I watched intrigued hoping that one day everyone would appreciate them for what they are Kings of the Australian Skies and as their name says "bold eagles".

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Letter from Page 3 concludes

These are the submissions made by the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

Yours faithfully,

David Pfrunder (Hon. Sec.)

BIRDS & MEMORIES

Do you associate the call or sight of any particular bird with a specific place, time or event in your life?

There are several instances of this in our family's experiences, some of which I will relate & happily other members of our club will tell us about similar experiences they have had - - - -

Noisy Friar Birds

Noisy Friar Birds mean two things to us; a red beach bucket and Gurrulmundi.

One stormy night at Kogan a Noisy Friar Birds' nest, complete with young, was blown out of a tree. We had been interested in the bulky nest hanging so precariously from a Carbean in our garden and its occupants. When the storm was over our immediate thoughts were of the nest and as expected we found it on the ground. The young birds appeared unharmed so Irene placed the nest complete with young birds in a red beach bucket and hung it in a tree just outside the window. Why a red beach bucket we don't know except that presumably it was the only suitable thing handy.

Next morning at daylight, much to our pleasant surprise, the adult Noisy Friar Birds were feeding the family. The red beach bucket was evidently their idea of a very satisfactory nesting place and they reared their brood with no further problems.

For years every time we saw a Noisy Friar Bird we wondered if it was a descendant from our red beach bucket brood and every time we saw a red beach bucket we wondered if it had ever been the site for a Noisy Friar Birds nest.

The other association of Noisy Friar Birds with Gurrulmundi would be obvious to any one who has been to Gurrulmundi during the spring. It is a beautiful wild flower area north of Miles, where Grevillea longistyla and many Eucalypts flower profusely providing a banquet for honey eaters. On approaching the main flowering area the characteristic cackling and chortling of Noisy Friar Birds can be clearly heard and it was a tradition for us to stop and listen to the chorus in the distance. Much of the noise is so riotous that we suspected most of the banquet had fermented. However whether the noise was genuine appreciation of good food or intoxication we never hear Noisy Friar Birds without thinking of that beautiful wild flower area at Gurrulmundi and of course the red beach bucket.

When I have read of a few others' bird experiences I will tell you how we associate Dollar Birds with a large dam and a straw hat; Currawongs with the Canarvons; Hoels with Mango trees; Crested Bell Birds with hallucinations and Rainbow Lorrikeets with Greensleeves.

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