

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.

Monthly newsletter of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club.

No. 43

October 1973

P.O. Box 154, Stanthorpe.

Officers and Committee 1973 - 1974.

President	Mr.F.Wilkinson
Vice Presidents	Mr.R.Leisemann and Mrs.J.Harslett
Secretary	Mr.E.Walker Ph.888
Treasurer	Mrs.G.Leisemann, Cwth.Bank Bus.Hrs.
Editors	Mr.I.Jackson and Mrs.D.Orr.
Newsletter Sub-Committee	Mrs.B.Krautz and Mrs.W.Cathcart.
Librarian	Mrs.Z.Newman
Publicity Officer	
Flora "	Mrs.D.McCosker
Fauna "	Miss J.Westcott
Geology "	Mr.P.Higgins
Youth "	Mr.G.Marsden
Bushwalking "	Mr.R.McCosker.

Activities.

Meetings	4th Wednesday of each month
	C.W.A. Rooms, 8 p.m.
Outings	Sunday preceeding 4th Wednesday.

Annual Subscriptions.

Single \$1.50	Family \$2.00
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Programme.Field Outings:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Pratten Goldfields	21st October	Mr.E.McCulloch.
Quartz Mine, Tenterfield	25th November	Mr.P.Ingram.

Meetings:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Slides of Overseas Trip	24th October	Mrs.J.Harslett.

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Did you know : The answer to your prayer may be the echo of your resolve.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Minutes of General Meeting held 26th September 1973:

Twenty members were present with apologies being received from seven. President welcomed Mrs. John Harslett.

Minutes of previous meeting: Moved Mr. R. McCosker, seconded Mrs. F. Wilkinson that the minutes of August meeting be confirmed.

Inward Correspondence: (i) Newsletters from associate Nats. Clubs.
(ii) Press releases from D.P.I.
(iii) Notice of Boonah Butter Week 4.10.73

at Boonah.

(iv) Letter from Toowoomba Field Nats. with details of car stickers.

Outward Correspondence: (i) Letter to Adult Education re advertising in Border Post.

(ii) Letter to Mr. D.P. Vernon requesting a lecture in August.

Moved Mr. M. Passmore, seconded Mrs. R. Harslett that the inward correspondence be received and the outward adopted.

Business from Minutes: Further investigations are to be made re availability of car stickers.

Treasurer's Report: Credit Balance 62.92
Subscriptions 21.00

83.92

Lee's Account (covers etc.)

22.20

Credit Balance 861.72

Moved G. Leisemann, seconded E. Walker that the Treasurer's report be accepted and accounts passed for payment.

General Business: A discussion on future guest speakers followed and it was decided to write to Mr. Kirkpatrick and to Mr. Monteith for future lectures.

Further discussion on the declaration of the Police Paddock as a flora and fauna sanctuary ensued and it was pointed out by Mrs. J. Harslett that with investigations so far carried out, it might well prove to be reserved already.

Outings: Mr. R. Leisemann reported on the extra outing to Castle Rock area - about members attending.

Mr. B. McDonagh reported on the normal outing to his property where twenty four members attended.

The venue of the October outing has been changed from Leslie Dam to the Pratten Goldfields. This trip will be led by

Mr. E. McCulloch.

The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m. after which Mr. M. Passmore lectured to the club on Basic Geology.

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The Fantastic Five.

Apple Blossom pink and white,
In Spring you glow, day and night.
We've called you the fantastic five,
So watch the bees come from the hive
And dance around those petals five
To get the pollen to take back home
Where they are welcomed by a drone.

S.O.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Carnarvon National Park:

Some 475 miles (approx. 765 kilometers) from Brisbane via Roma and Injune and 73 miles from Injune via the Carnarvon Highway to the turn off, and then another 28 miles (approx. 45 Kms.) to the camping area, will put you into one of the most interesting areas in Queensland ; Carnarvon National Park.

On the 28th April, 1938 this area of 66,480 acres (26,900 hectares) on the recommendation of the Land Commissioner T.K. Harvey, was proclaimed a National Park. It is 200 miles from the coast and is part of the Consuelo Tableland, which rises over 3,000 feet and forms part of the Great Dividing Range.

The geology of the area is deep Mesozoic sandstone with a Tertiary basalt cap. These sandstones are part of the series forming the intake beds of the Great Artesian Basin. The low average rainfall is 27 inches (approx. 700 mls.)

Rather than give you an involved detailed description of each feature, we mention a few and hope these will "encourage" you!

Starting at the entrance and working up the gorge:-
TOMAHAWK CAVE: aboriginal paintings, showing weapons etc. MOSS Gardens, a pleasant site abounding in cool waters and fine examples of mosses in their natural state. HELLHOLE GORGE & VIOLET GORGE deep side gorges containing many interesting rock formations, plant life etc. AMPHITHEATRE; a geological wonder in rock. ALJON FALLS & ANGIOPTERIS RAVINE; this area is noted for its tree ferns and for the rare Angiopteris evecta fern. ART GALLERY: many excellent examples of stencil paintings by the aboriginal tribes. CATHEDRAL CAVE a large overhanging rock in the form of a cathedral, contains aboriginal paintings and rock carvings. BOOWINDA CREEK: unusual cliff faces, interesting rock shapes, something to see at every turn. BATTLESHIP SPUR: an uninterrupted view of the gorge from this high peak, a day's hike from Cathedral Cave, but worth it. NABOOLOO CREEK ferns, moss covered walls, dim and eerie.

The walking track is ungraded, but in excellent condition and follows the main gorge, but the side gorges also provide many interests. It would be very difficult to become lost in this park, provided one did not scale the cliff faces, which is nearly impossible anyhow. Aboriginal art is a feature of this Park and therefore it is an offence to mark or damage it.

If you are able, a week can be well spent in this area. If possible a base camp at say, Cathedral Cave or near area for a few days will provide access to many of the sites and eliminates the need for "double walking" from the main camping area every day. The cave is approx 7 miles from the Park entrance and is a full day's walk with gear if one stops along the way and the creek must be crossed approx. 27 times to reach this point.

The main track and side tracks are well signposted, and all creek crossings marked, with stepping stones provided. To see the majesty of those white and orange streaked cliffs, the dim light of the side gorges, the Livistona palms, cycads (Macrozamia moorei) and the huge spotted gums (Eucalyptus maculata) and the flooded gums (E. grandis) urges one on to see more.

THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Birds:

Watching a recent Leyland Brothers special on T.V. which featured the Torres Straits pigeons and the very few which now breed on the Barrier Reef Islands reminded me of an article by E. J. Banfield published in "Birds of Paradox" on his observations of these birds on Dunk Island. He describes the flight of the pigeons from the mainland as a great, almost uncountable host. He considered at least 100,000 birds passed his island every morning and afternoon and even this he considered was small compared with the hordes of birds who visited the islands in the days of the pioneers. Banfield was concerned about the fate of these pigeons in his day and he has been dead many years.

For the conservation conscious, a note on the usage in the past of birds' plumage in woman's fashions which was also printed in "Birds of Paradox" may not go amiss. In a description of the various Bills being introduced in the Parliaments of Australia and Britain to prohibit the exportation of plumage of birds, London was described as the feather market of the world. It must have been an immense market with continental buyers attending it and bird skins and plumes were shipped to it from all parts of the world. In the year 1907 a list of the merchandise is enlightening. There were catalogued 2,337 packages of Osprey and the skins of 28,301 Birds of Paradise. During the last six months of 1907 there were catalogued 19,742 skins of the Birds of Paradise, 1,411 packages of the nestling plumes of the White Heron (representing the feathers of nearly 115,000 birds). At the June sales of that year, there were sold 1,386 Crowned Pigeon heads, 20,000 Kingfishers and 200 Lyre Birds Tails. Sales of Crowned Pigeons heads at a later sale was shown as being 8,867.

A list of the more ordinary plumage offered at these sales is as follows: 15,644 parrots, 30 tons of plumage, 4 tons of Pheasants' tails, 1,000,000 Pheasant wings, 8 tons Guinea Fowl plumage, 400,000 Ptarmigan wings, 3 tons Ptarmigan plumage, 100,000 Golden Plover wings, 200,000 Black Plover wings, 400,000 Wild Duck wings, 300,000 Snipe wings, 52,000 Wood Cock wings, 130,000 Teal wings.

Reading figures such as these is it any wonder that so many species of birds have been decimated in the past 100 years? One is also struck with these incredible figures and of course wonders just how authentic they are.

Bill Barker.

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Fish - oh!

A recent U.N.A.(Q) Newsletter reports that a team of fisheries experts from Australia and America have been cataloguing the fish in the sea round Lord Howe Island and discovered 190 species of fish previously unknown in those seas and 8 species previously completely unknown to scientists. As mankind will have to rely more and more in future on food from the sea it will be realized this exercise was not undertaken from curiosity.

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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Extra Outing 13th - 14th October:

The extra outing consisting of a camp-out on Swan Creek over the weekend 13th - 14th October, was attended by only two families, but proved very enjoyable as the weather was perfect for bushwalking.

Saturday's walks included a ramble through Hell-Hole Gorge where the stream passes over a small waterfall and the birds and wallabies added interest. Black snakes appeared to be prevalent at this time of year. In the afternoon a climb up the ridge beside the Sentinel gave a good view of the planned trip for Sunday.

Sunday morning 8 a.m. saw four energetic souls climbing the north peak of Doubletop and by 10 a.m. the cameras were snapping breathtaking views from the top. The group then moved on the track south along the crest to the second peak and after a short rest and photographing some brilliant red flowers and more scenes continued on to the third point at the end of the ridge up from Swan Creek for a lunch stop.

Here, the open forest came to an end for a time.

After an hour's break, the group plunged into the dimness and vines of the Rainforest Razorback and were lucky enough to sight a Lyrebird after hearing its mimicry.

Emerging from the rainforest, four tiring travellers climbed again to the knoll at the north end of Huntly Saddle which also afforded much work for the cameras.

The time was then 3 p.m. and under the towering cliffs of Huntly, the hikers turned south-west to skirt its base and turn west down a ridge towards Swan Creek. Even with the help of a logging road, it was another 2 hours before the campsite came into view and the weary had earned their rest.

Of particular note on the weekend was the phenomenal range and number of birds in the area, and there were many wild flowers including orchids and lillies.

Several very good one day outings could be held in this neck of the woods and would be of interest to all.

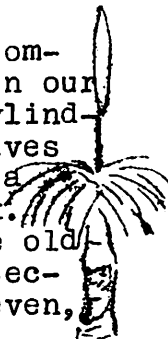
In spite of a few ticks and the snakes, all those who attended, voted the weekend a great success and look forward to the next.

A MEMBER.

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XANTHORRHOEA AUSTRALIA: is the name given to the plant more commonly known as "Black Boy" or "Kangaroo Tails". Seen often in our district it grows from 5 to 7 metres high, and bears a long cylindrical inflorescence which may be up to 3 metres long. The leaves are dark green and linear, and remain for many years forming a "grass skirt" around the top of the dark brown or black trunk.

The dried flower stalk can be used to make fire by the old method of friction. In fact fire may be obtained within 60 seconds. Flowering in Spring, the species, of which there are seven, is distributed throughout Australia.



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THE GRANITE BELT NATURALIST.Man Interferes with Nature:

Early man was a hunter and did not dominate the environment. It was not until he started to use fire and tools, tend flocks and grow crops that his numbers increased. He cleared forests, cultivated land, and began upsetting the balance of nature. What better way is there to do this than to introduce foreign plants and animals.

The Prickly pear plant was brought to Australia in the early days of settlement, because it is said, the plant was required for the cochineal insect to feed on. It was from this insect that the red dye for the jackets of the soldiers in the colony was obtained.

In its native country this plant had natural enemies that kept it in check, but these were not present in Australia, and so it soon spread. By 1925 it covered sixty million acres in Queensland and New South Wales. This infected area was increasing at the rate of one million acres per year. With the introduction of CACTOBLASTIS this vast area of prickly pear soon vanished. If an outbreak of prickly pear now occurs, the Cacto-Blas-tis insect moves in and soon restores the correct balance of nature.

An introduced animal to Australia was the rabbit. Having no natural enemies in the country it increased rapidly. In 1950 at the height of the rabbit plague, it was estimated that rabbits were consuming enough grass to feed an extra forty million sheep. The introduced fox found the more primitive marsupials easier to catch and likewise had become a pest. In 1950 the disease MISAMATOSIS was introduced from Brazil, and the rabbit was brought under some sort of control.

Other introduced pests are the sparrow, canetoad, lantana, and noogoora burr.

But where would we be without these?

No prickly pear to eat and get prickles in ones tongue!

No "bunnies" scurrying to their burrows, their ears laid flat and nose twitching!

No toads to play a prank with or chase with the garden fork!

No sparrows to twitter and chirp at the break of day!

No lantana to push your way through and no burr to sit on!

Life would be so uninteresting...!?!?

R.A.D.

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Some Botanical Terms:

Anther: the top of the stamen, holding pollen.

Ciliate: bordered by hairs.

Cone: a woody globular collection of fruits consisting of scales surrounding a central axis.

Epiphyte: a plant which grows on trees, but does not derive nourishment from them.

Genus: the smallest natural group of species having certain essential characteristics in common.

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