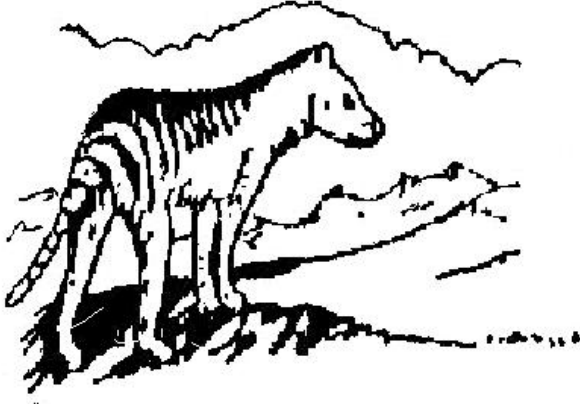


# THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

Issued to members of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club as a contribution to club activities.



The aim of the Launceston Field Naturalists Club is to encourage the study of all aspects of natural history and to support the conservation of our natural heritage

**Volume XLIX No. 1**

**October/November 2015**

<b>Patron</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Professor Nigel Forteach</b>
<b>President</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Mr T Treloggen, 68 Mulgrave St Launceston, 0408 341 397</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Ms J Handler, 52 Entally Rd Hadspen, 6393 6603</b>
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Mr N Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead, 6344 2277</b>
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Ms K Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead, 6344 2277</b>
<b>N'letter Co-ordinator</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Ms K. Manning</b>
<b>Librarian</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Ms T McGlynn</b>
<b>Committee</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Ms Campbell, Mr Geeves, Ms McGlynn, Mr Ralph, Mr Elliott, Mr Warren</b>

Meetings 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of month, Feb-Dec at Scotch-Oakburn College, Penquite Rd Newstead

## PROGRAM

### DECEMBER

- Tuesday 1**                    **Members Night ~ Photographic Competition and *The Year That Was***
- Saturday 12**                **Christmas @ Skemps (additional information in this newsletter)**

### JANUARY

- Field Trip ~ Bakers Beach, follow-up saltmarsh wetland monitoring (contact Noel 6344 2277 for date when confirmed)**
- Saturday 16**                **Field Trip ~ Four Springs Lake (APS field trip) contact Noel 63442277 for more detail**
- Sat 23—Mon 25**            **Ben Lomond ~ (additional information in this newsletter)**

### FEBRUARY

- Tuesday 2**                    **General Meeting ~ Andrew Fullard, Launceston Flood Authority**
- To be advised**              **Field Trip ~ to be advised**
- To be advised**              **Skemp Day**

### MARCH

- Tuesday 1**                    **General Meeting ~ Members night**
- Friday 11 -  
Monday 14**                    **Federation Weekend ~ Gowrie Park (additional information in this newsletter)**
- Sunday 20**                    **Skemp Day**

The full January to June 2016 program will be available soon

<http://www.lfnc.org.au/meetings.htm>

## COMMITTEE/GENERAL MEETING

**Skemp Report** ~ Noel reported that the outside toilet had been repaired and should be back in place for the Bug Day Out mid November. As a result of the tree that fell on it, and with Rob's help, we now have more firewood stored than ever before. Also with Rob's help we have cleared a major fall on the Zig Zag nature trail. He also asked for volunteers to assist with track maintenance and told members that the small waratahs were in flower, although most of the flowers were on the top branches only.

### Puggle

**November** ~ John asked members what was wrong with the recent Examiner article on the swift parrot. Prue and David stated that the picture was not of a swift parrot. John had identified it as the little lorikeet, *Glossopsitta pusilla*, a bird not seen in Tasmania.

### Sightings

**October** ~ Marion had seen two eastern rosellas eating grass seeds today, Peter W had seen hundreds of currawong on the way to Ben Lomond and Tony saw three eagles and galahs. John found manna under a eucalypt tree when walking from the Top Falls and found it pleasant to the taste.

**November** ~ Daphne told us of a ruckus in her yard as forest ravens harassed a white cockatoo, while David saw a satin fly catcher at Longford as well as many black cockatoos. Judith saw a sea eagle at Rutherglen and Alma saw one at Four Springs Lake. Noel saw an eagle on the ground at Skemps being harassed by a forest raven, Tom T had seen a green rosella at Franklin House and Prue two young blue tongued lizards at home.

**Library Report** ~ Tina stated she had acquired *Common Grasses of Tasmania* (which did not feature many native species) and had also purchased *Tasmanian Devil: A Unique and Threatened Animal*.

### General ~

**New members** ~ We wish to welcome Danny, Shannon and Abigail Bosanquet, and Caitlin Lowe to the Club. We look forward to them joining us at future meetings, field trips and at the Club's property, Skemps.

**Christmas at Skemps** ~ will be held on Saturday 12th December. Members are welcome to invite their family and friends to join them.

Please bring your own lunch, the BBQ will be lit if you would like to bring something to cook. A plate of food to share for afternoon tea would be appreciated, coffee and tea will be provided. There will be a lucky door prize so get your ticket on arrival.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ~ *Tuesday 6 October*

Thankyou to the twenty four members, one guest and Club Patron Nigel Forteach for their support by attending the AGM dinner meeting. Held at Kain's Restaurant, at the Riverview Hotel Launceston the service provided by staff was very good and the meals large and delicious.

Tom Treloggen started the evening by presenting his report for 2015.

“Good evening and welcome to the Launceston Field Naturalists Club's AGM for 2015, to visitors, members, and a special welcome to our Patron Professor Nigel Forteach to our dinner. At last years meeting we had interstate guests attend who were here for the ANN get-together it Hobart.

I will start as usual by giving a summary of the Club's activities for the twelve months, another busy and successful year. In October 2014 we had an outing to Badger Head with the Dell's from Western Australia joining us. November 4, our guest speaker was Jane Elek, the Burnie Field Naturalists Club hosted Federation at Somerset. Saturday 15, there was an APS trip to Breadalbane for threatened species and Sunday 16, the Club had a trip to Henry Somerset Reserve with Peter Tonelli. Sunday 30, Skemp's hosted the QVMAG Bug Day Out which was very successful. In December with great contributions by our members for '*The Year That Was*' and our photo competition followed by the popular 'Christmas at Skemps' day. In January 2015 there was no general meeting as usual, but thanks to Peter Warren we had a weekend trip to Ben Lomond 16-18 January. Also we were invited by APS to join them at the Vale of Belvoir near Cradle Mountain on 24 January. On February 3, our general meeting guest speaker was Professor Nigel Forteach followed by a great field trip to Four Springs Lake. March 3, general meeting our guest speaker was Emma Williams on Saltmarsh Wetlands, then a trip to East Beach rock pool on 15 March and on 23 March we had a social evening at Steves Grill and a Skemps day on the 21 March. In April there was no general meeting held as our venue at Scotch Oakburn College was not available due to fumigation, but we had a social evening instead at the RSL 'Indian Fire Restaurant'. A trip with the APS and Tanya Bailey to Connorville on 18 April, and watermonitoring at Skemps on 26 April. May 5, we had our John Skemp Memorial Lecture delivery by Mike Douglas who spoke on *The Riddle of the Sands* at Bridport, followed by an outing to the Bridport area. June 2, general meeting guest speakers Peter Tonelli and Alison Dugand on Raptors. A field trip was held on 7 June to Notley Fern Gorge and on 21 June a Skemps Day. July 7 general meeting was members night presentations, on 19 July a field trip to Railton area and Villaret Gardens and on 25 July National Tree Day at Skemps. August 4 general meeting our guest speaker was Simon Fearn on who spoke about European wasps, Saturday 15 field trip to Mersey Valley, Arm Falls, Gadd Falls and Mole Creek and on Sunday 30 at Skemps social day, John Elliott spoke about his Galapagos Island trip. September 1, general meeting guest speaker was John Duggin on wetlands, Sunday 19 trip to Mt Barrow Discovery Trail and on Sunday 27 a Skemp Day for the Mayor's visit.

In conclusion, thank you to my hardworking committee and all members who have contributed throughout the past year with activities etc. and at Skemps

which is going well even after a break in and tree damage and fire station now transferred to the LFNC. So once again thank you one and all.”

**Election of Office Bearers:** - With no nominations being lodged prior to the AGM with the Secretary, the following nominations were accepted from the floor and with no further nominees, they were declared elected.

President - Tom Tregglen

Vice President - Judith Handlinger

Treasurer - Karen Manning

Secretary - Noel Manning

Committee Members - Jill Campbell, Tina McGlynn, Peter Warren,  
Tony Geeves, Peter Ralph, John Elliott

It was resolved that members subscriptions would remain the same as last years - Juniors \$5.00, Single \$30.00, Family \$40.00, Associate Groups \$45.00.

### **FIELD TRIP ~ Flinders Island ~ Wednesday 7 to Sunday 11 October**

Thirteen LFNC members arrived at 8.35 a.m. at Whitemark Airport and were met by Tina and Tom McGlynn, who had arrived on Monday 5<sup>th</sup>. After hiring another car (driven by Tom) and a minibus (driven by Ann) all 15 of us drove for therapeutic refreshment to Freckles Café in Whitemark and the adjacent Killiecrankie Enterprises shop.

Next we drove about 7km up a forest track to Walkers Lookout (411m) on the Darling Range. This well-signed lookout offers clear views in all directions, giving a good general idea of the whole island and its many offshore islands. Flinders is about 65 km from north to south and 35km east to west. It has remarkable contrasts in terrain, much land being totally level and cleared for agriculture (mainly Angus beef cattle) while steep mountain ranges cover about a third of the island and large lagoons border the east coast. Smoke from fires near one of the lagoons was visible many kilometres away. Signs on all major paths warned hikers that ‘All Walking Tracks Are Closed Due To A Total Fire Ban.’ Flinders had had its record October high of 33°C a day earlier - 6<sup>th</sup> October.

From Walker’s Lookout we drove southwest to Strzelecki National Park and lunched at Trousers Point Beach, which is beautifully curved and sheltered between granite headlands with Mount Strzelecki as a backdrop. We then walked to Fotheringate Beach across the northern headland which is covered by wind-swept she oaks, coastal wattles and tea tree. From Trousers Point pyramidal Mount Chappell Island (200m) is clearly visible 10 km to the southwest.

There was something for everyone - new flora to focus on, exposed geology to examine and wonderful scenery to admire and photograph. Also, for some of us, a glow of achievement on reaching the other end! As we walked north the huge granite boulders so common across much of Flinders were interspersed with jagged, weathered limestone deposits, some so eroded as to resemble sculptures or stalactites. A sign informed us that the rock was calcarenite produced by fluctuating Bass Strait sea levels that have combined limestone from ancient shells with sands from the sea floor. We didn’t explore the full length of beautiful, deserted Fotheringate Beach (7km long) but its wave-cut eroded

formations were strikingly memorable.

A straight sandy track led back to Trousers Point car park from where those in the minibus drove to Whitemark to buy supplies from the only supermarket and to move into their 3 self-contained houses – Elvstan Cottages and Leafmoor-in-Whitemark.

It had been a beautiful, sunny day with amazing scenery. Many of us probably wondered why on earth we'd not been to Flinders Island more often.

Tom and Tina McGlynn

On Thursday we headed to Killiecrankie to search for diamonds with four kits hired from Killiecrankie Enterprises, Whitemark. Local resident Vicky, known to Noel, showed us a spot where diamonds might be found. Initially planning to point the way she started chatting with Tina and added local colour to our trip as she wandered along over the stretch of rocks to the tiny bay where we would look for diamonds.

I was surprised to hear that only around ten people lived here in the winter. Vicky wandered over the rocks and pointed to a small bay, where Claire already was, as the place to pan. We all enthusiastically dug and panned till lunch time risking a soaking as we sort water deep enough to do the panning. We chatted in small groups as we ate our lunch then continued less enthusiastically to dig and pan. Later we dejectedly walked back to our cars knowing we had not found any diamonds.

Noel Manning

During our visit we travelled to three areas on the island to observe birds. The first on the Thursday afternoon was to the northern most tip of the island to visit an area on the North East River. On the sandflats of the river we could see sooty and pied oystercatchers, pelicans and terns. Walking back along the river we saw many saltmarsh wetland plants and found two unattended spotted eggs in a sand nest high on the beach. We then drove to the mouth of the river and walked in and around the North East Rock area where there were lots of cormorants.

Karen Manning



Karl panning for the elusive diamond

On our return to Whitemark we dropped into the north-west settlement of Palana. After seeing only one dead wombat in the first two days of our trip Claire spotted our first live one and we were to see many more on the last two days. Palana is home to an historical homestead and two small concrete bunkers, used as a radio and radar hut during World War II. Just to the side of the car park the second concrete bunkers was open. It sits empty with just a few hooks and pipes running

across the ceiling while the one on the road in is locked. It was noted that the bunkers were not covered in the expected graffiti.

With picturesque views over Inner Sister and Outer Sister Islands the area is mostly made up of holiday homes.

Along the shore a shelter had been created for a boat maybe up to 10 metres. A large boulder a few metres from the shore had been turned into a breakwater by adding a pile of rocks a metre and a half high and at least five metres long.

It created a small, private and hidden beach of completely transparent water, where today only the smallest of dinghies could make it to shore.

Back on the main road we made one stop based on a tip-off from Vicki who we had met earlier at Killiecrankie. Stopping at a culvert we found the running marsh flower growing in the tannin-hued water which Vicki thought was rare. We could also hear the common froglet calling.

Although ranking highly on my list of favourite places on Flinders, our stop at Palana was brief due to the need to get back to the Whitemark IGA store. The group was having a barbeque on the beach that evening and with just 10 minutes until closing time we raided the shelves of the store. Everything is closed by 5:30, but they're probably used to us "mainlanders" rushing in at the last minute.

The barbeque facilities are probably the cleanest I've ever used, cloths, stainless steel scourers and detergent were left in a bucket and clearly people were doing the right thing with them. Near the end of our meal we witnessed the sun setting into the Bass Strait (the Manning's, Tom and Nick had also seen it the previous evening), helping to finish off a great day. Karl Manning

On the Friday of the Flinders Island trip I set out to spend the day walking up Mt Strzelecki, another eight members set off with me but only spent a couple hours on the lower slopes before heading off to Lady Barron and would collect me later in the afternoon. I wanted to see rock orchids and a banded greenhood (*Pterostylis sanguinea*). I had seen them on a previous trip when I got part way up before turning back to take someone back to Whitemark. Other orchids were also possible. The rock orchids were easy: soon after the start, in full bloom, cascading over granite boulders.

After that, very little and nothing special. Jeff Campbell, Barry Dudman and Kevin Bonham weren't there, which didn't help. It had been very dry, however. One damper area looked promising but the feral pigs thought so too.

There were compensations: huge granite walls and slides, big areas of stinkwood with larger than normal flowers, westringia, fully open cliff ever-lasting daisies and fogs rolling in from the west.

It wasn't a particularly hard walk. There are enough level stretches where you can catch your breath and steps in the steeper sections to help the Three-Peak runners.

But did I make the top? No. Like Moses I was close enough to glimpse the Promised Land but not close enough to get there, have my lunch and be back to the road in time to be picked up. John Elliott

After spending a couple of hours on Mt Strzelecki and seeing the magnificent rock orchids we headed to Lady Barron to meet up with other

members for lunch at Yellow Beach. It was very relaxing sitting on the wooden platform which had been built just above the beach, eating our lunch and listening to the water lapping below and the birds above. We then walked over to the rocks on the headland and rock hopped, while others kept going around to the next beach.

With lunch settled, the bus group set off to visit Logans Lagoon a short distance away. The lagoon is a land locked coastal wetland on the south-eastern side of the island which was designated a RAMSAR site in 1982 and is a nesting site for local and migratory birds. Not being sure where to view the birds we drove around the water on a track badly in need of some improvement. We finally stopped at a point where we could see the South Chain Lagoon which was north of our intended viewing area. Where Ann turned the van around we were able to look straight down the length of the waterway. It was here Noel saw an echidna and a tunnel shaped spider web in a tree.

Returning to the place where we had passed bird identification boards earlier, four members pushed their way through thigh high reeds to the mudflats where we could see black swans, masked lapwings, red-capped plovers, silver gulls and black-fronted dotterel. The weather was deteriorating with the wind strengthening, the sky becoming overcast and visibility was poor over the water due to heat haze. We observed a large flock of birds lift up from the lagoon, sweeping and swirling around before settling further across the lagoon in our direction. Setting up her telescope on the mudflats, Prue described the bird as white with long legs, black wings, long beak and a black band, stating it was probably a stilt. Ann obtained a good image with her long lensed camera which also helped identify the bird later that evening as a *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*, a banded stilt, which they found was last recorded visiting the lagoon in 2012.

There were little grass wrens scurrying around the edge of the saltmarsh plants behind us, four pelicans could be seen high above flying in formation on the thermals and we also saw a sea eagle. As our visit was late in the day we decided that the spot was worth a revisit to check out the birds and the wildflowers along the roadside on another occasion.

Karen Manning

Originally we thought we would have to walk from Emita to Castle Rock. We



*Disphyma crassifolium*, roundleaf pigface

weren't sure how this would be for some members of the group. The map suggested, however, that we might be able to walk in from the road which looked easier. Then we found out that buses and cars could drive almost to the rock. Problem solved.

Noel, Karen and I walked the 2 km from Palana Road to Castle Rock. There wasn't all that much to see but if you don't get out of the bus, you never know.



It might have been better if winter and spring had been wetter. We did see *Caladenia latifolia*, however. It is common in coastal areas but I don't think I have seen it since my previous visit to Flinders.

A spectacular find was a large number of bright orange horehound bugs (*Agonoscelis rutila*). They were feeding on Horehound (an introduced weed) but apparently they are natives so we can count them.

The coast poisonpea (*Swainsona lessertifolia*) was flowering. We also saw the fineleaf coast groundsel (*Senecio pinnatifolius* var *capillifolius*) which is restricted to the Furneaux Islands. It has yellow flowers and fleshy, pinnately-divided leaves.

Members who had driven into the beach at Marshall Bay had visited Castle Rock and spent time on the beach looking at the flotsam and jetsam while they awaited our arrival. With the weather about to change we visited the rock on arrival before everyone but me went in the cars to Wybalenna and Emita. I walked on to Emita, mainly because I could.

The walk from Emita might have been difficult for some. There are a couple of rocky headlands just south of Castle Rock. After that it is straight-forward walking along beaches or over low headlands.

John Elliott

On Saturday morning we set off around 9am the weather was fine, cool and sunny. While we filled up with petrol, some of our members visited the bakery for lunch and treats. We finally left Whitemark at 9.30 am heading to Marshall Bay. Nick, Jill and I were in the wagon, Tom and Tina in their car with passengers Mike and Judith, other members travelling in the bus.

The first stop was the walk to the famous 'Castle Rock' now only a short walk from the Marshall Bay carpark. Most stopped to take photos next to the rock, then some walked further over the rocky headland looking for unusual geological formations, then went further along the beach.

We then drove to Settlement Point Lookout, viewing the many mutton-bird (Shearwater) burrows there. With the wind increasing we went in to Lillies Beach where we found a sheltered spot and had our lunch.

Our next stop was Wybalenna, where the rain was threatening, visiting the old chapel, graveyard and farmhouse before returning to the car and driving to the Furneaux Museum in Emita to meet the occupants of the other vehicles at 1pm who had visited all the places above but in a different order. John, who walked from Castle Rock, arrived at the Museum just before the heavy rain started.

In the Museum, out of the wet and windy conditions we explored the buildings, many of them being exhibits themselves. They included the Nissen hut and Works Office buildings from the post WWII War Service Land Settlement Scheme, the two-roomed Whitemark police cells and a building named Dryazell that was once a private school and residence of the first government teacher on the island and still in its original location.

Mrs Gray's room was very popular with its collections relating to indigenous aboriginalities and European history of the island, and also an extensive natural history collection.

The bus group then headed to Long Point and found a secluded point where they observed a large number of great egrets, black swans and terns on the mudflats at the furthest point of the Arthur Bay Conservation Area. Other members braved the weather and visited Allport Beach, then onto Blue Rock followed by Long Point meeting up with the bus group where we observed white faced heron, silver gulls and sooty oystercatchers from the bird hide on Long Point Road using Prue's

telescope and sharing the binoculars around.

We returned by 6pm to our respective accommodation having a cuppa and getting ready for our meal at the Interstate Hotel at 6.30pm. Another full and enjoyable day.

Tom Trellegen

The van group then drove to Patriarchs Sanctuary, detouring firstly to the lookout at Middle Patriarch which was about 2 kilometre up a very steep side road. A few members in the vehicle spotted an albino echidna on the roadside, which then couldn't be found once we stopped to take a closer look. At the lookout the trees had grown very tall and obscured any views. Some of the group decided to bush bash to a large boulder close-by to try and get some photo friendly views, but there still wasn't much on offer with only the ocean and mountains a long way off in the distance.

At Patriarchs Sanctuary the thick bush opened up to low shrubs and grasslands. The pobblebunks (frogs) in the small pond near the carpark were very noisy and it was here a decent sized wombat hung around outside his burrow in the pond bank for us to photograph. There was an a-frame hut on the site which accommodated overnight volunteers who worked in the Sanctuary. From the small balcony upstairs you got a great view out over the grasslands to the ocean, "*it was a highrise penthouse with ocean views*". There was also a pleasant picnic area and the best toilet/bathroom on the whole island, compared to the long drops we had to use elsewhere. We used the pellets available (by donation) to feed the friendly wallabies, many of which had babes in their pouches.

The group who visited the day before told us of a friendly snake and about stony lagoon just a short walk away over the fields, but with a booking at the hotel for tea, we couldn't stay longer. On the drive back we saw raptors on the powerlines and passed a sign stating we had just crossed the 40° south point.

Following a quick trip to our accommodation to change and freshen up, met at the Interstate Hotel for tea at 7pm where we enjoyed good sized tasty meals and dessert. Nick, Karen and Tom visited Leafmoor Cottage for a nightcap and to discuss our itinerary for the final day, then returned to the Elvstan Cottages to bed, where we listened to a thunderstorm.

Claire Manning

On the Sunday morning we packed our gear in readiness for our return flight late in the afternoon. We stored our luggage at Tom and Tina's accommodation and also returned the station wagon to cut costs. The van had sufficient seats for all, but Mike and Judith travelled with Tom and Tina, which allowed us to spread out a bit. We drove to Lady Barron to visit Vinegar Hill, a lookout known for its great views across the Furneaux Islands to Cape Barren Island. It has also been said that on a very clear day you can see mainland Tasmania, but not today. We walked around the area looking for a large patch of ground orchids that we had been told were there, but found only a couple of *Caladenia* which were hard to photograph due to the breeze. A grey green looking snake slithered across the road in front of me, not sure what species it was and wasn't going to follow it to find out.

We then returned to Logans Lagoon not far from Lady Barron for a second visit where we had a late morning tea/early lunch. Visibility was better that day although the water level was lower. John and Ann waded out to one of the sand islands to get a better view of the birds beyond, the thousands of banded stilts were still present. All the bird areas we visited on the island had colourful information boards depicting the birds we could expect to see, we were however disappointed with the variety of

species seen.

Returning to Whitemark, we stopped at two places to look at wildflowers along the lagoon road. There were white and pink common heath, short purpleflag, spreading guineaflowers, coast and twiggy beardheath and slender honeymyrtles to name a few, a very colourful area of plants.

Back at Tom and Tina's we gathered our gear and loaded it into the bus for the airport, with little room left in the bus, a few members walked the short distance to the airport. Our flight home was smooth, with great views over the outer Flinders islands and we flew directly over Skemps. We could see Myrtle Park and the adjoining property above, but we could not see Skemps as we were directly overhead. Missed by that much!

In summary we had a great time, saw as much of the island as possible and we were lucky with the weather. Many of us are looking forward to another visit. Many thanks to members who contributed to writing up this field trip.

Karen Manning

**Flora** ~ *Acacia genistifolia*, spreading wattle; *A. longifolia* subsp *sophorae*, coast wattle; *A. mucronata* sp., caterpillar wattle; *A. suaveolens*, sweet wattle; *A. verticillata*, prickly mooses; *Acaena novae-zelandiae*, common buzzy; *Acianthus caudatus*, mayfly orchid; *Ajuga australis*, austral bugle; *Allocasuarina monilifera*, necklace sheoak; *A. verticillata*, drooping sheoak; *Ammophila arenaria*, marram grass (i); *Amperea xiphioclada*, broom spurge; *Aotus ericoides*, golden pea; *Apium prostratum*, slender sea-celery; *Asplenium flabelli-folium*, necklace fern; *Atriplex cinerea*, grey saltbush; *Baloskion*, sp., tassel cordrush fine; *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Bauera rubioides*, wiry bauera; *Billardiera mutabilis*, green appleberry; *Boronia anemonifolia*, stinky boronia; *Bulbine bulbosa*, golden bulbine-lily; *Bursaria spinosa*, prinkly box; *Caladenia latifolia*, pink fairies; *Callitris rhomboidea*, oyster bay pine; *Carpobrotus rossii*, native pigface; *Cassinia aculeata*, dollybush; *Cassytha melantha*, large dodderlaurel (black fruit); *C. glabella*, slender dodderlaurel; *Chiloglottis* sp., bird-orchid; *Cladina* sp., kangaroo lichen; *Clematis aristata*, mountain clematis; *C. microphylla*, small-leaf clematis; *Comesperma volubile*, blue lovecreeper; *Coprosma quadrifida*, native currant; *Correa reflexa*, common correa; *Cotula australis*, southern buttons; *C. coronopifolia*, water buttons; *Cupressus macrocarpa*, monterey cypress (i); *Cyathea australis*, rough treefern; *Dampiera stricta*, blue dampiera; *Dichondra repens*, kidneyweed; *Dicksonia antarctica*, soft treefern; *Dillwynia glaberrima*, smooth parrotpea; *Diplarrena moraea*, white flag-iris; *Disphyma crassifolium*, roundleaf pigface; *Dockrilla striolata* ssp *striolata*, streaked rock orchid; *Dodonaea viscosa*, broadleaf hopbush; *Drosera peltata* sp., tall sundew; *Epacris impressa*, common heath in pink and white flowers; *Epacris lanuginosa*, swamp heath; *Eucalyptus* sp., gum; *Euphorbia paralias*, sea spurge (i); *Exocarpos syrticola*, coast native-cherry; *Ficinia nodosa*, knobby club rush; *Gahnia grandis*, cutting grass; *Gleichenia* sp., coral fern; *Goodenia ovata*, hop native-primrose; *Goodia lotifolia* sp., goldentip; *Hakea epiglottis*, beaked needlebush; *H. nodosa*, yellow needlebush; *H. teretifolia*, dagger needlebush; *Hibbertia empetrifolia*; scrambling guinea-flower; *H. procumbens*, spreading guineaflower; *H. virgata*, twiggy guinea flower; *Histiopteris incisa*, batwing fern; *Hypolepsis rugosula*, ruddy groundfern; *Indigofera australis*, native indigo; *Juncus* sp., rush; *Kennedia prostrata*, running postman; *Kunzea ambigua*, white kunzea; *Lagurus ovatus*, Hare's tail grass (i); *Lasiopetalum macrophyllum*, shrubby velvetbush;

*Lepidosperma longitudinale*, spreading swordsedg; *Leptecophylla* sp., pinkberry; *Leptomeria drupacea*, erect currantbush; *Leptospermum* sp., teatree; *L. glaucescens*, smoky teatree; *L. grandiflorum*, autumn teatree; *L. laevigatum*, coastal teatree; *Leucophyta brownii*, cushionbush; *Leucopogon australis*, spike beardheath; *L. ericoides*, pink beardheath; *L. parviflorus*, coast beardheath; *L. virgatum*, twiggy beardheath; *Lomatia tinctoria*, guitar plant; *Melaleuca ericifolia*, coast paperbark; *M. gibbosa*, slender honeymyrtle; *M. squarrosa*, scented paperbark; *Microsorium pustulatum*, kangaroo fern; *Notelaea ligustrina*, native olive; *Olearia lirata*, forest daisybush; *O. phlogopappa* sp., dusty daisybush; *Ornduffia reniformis*, running marshflower; *Oxalis perennans*, grassland woodsorrel; *Patersonia fragilis*, short purpleflag; *Pelargonium* sp., storksbill; *Persoonia juniperina*, prickly geebung; *Pimelea drupacea*, cherry riceflower; *P. humilis*, dwarf riceflower; *P. serpyllifolia*, thyme riceflower; *Pinus radiata*, radiata pine (i); *Pittosporum bicolor*, cheesewood; *Platylobium triangulare*, arrow flatpea; *Poa* sp., tussockgrass; *Pomaderris apetala*, common dogwood; *P. elliptica*, yellow dogwood; *P. oraria*, bassian dogwood; *P. paniculosa*, shining dogwood; *Pteridium esculentum*, bracken; *Pterostylis nutans*, nodding greenhood; *P. pedunculata*, maroonhood leaf cluster; *Pultenaea daphnoides*, heartleaf bushpea; *P. dentata*, swamp bushpea; *P. gunnii* sp., golden bushpea; *P. stricta*, rigid bushpea; *Rhagodia candolleana*, coastal saltbush; *Sarcocornia quinqueflora*, beaded glasswort; *Senecio linearifolius*, fireweed groundsel; *S. minimus*, shrubby fireweed; *S. pinnatifolius* var *capillifolius*, fineleaf coast groundsel; *Sprengelia incarnata*, pink swampheath; *Stackhousia monogyna*, forest candles; *Styidium graminifolium*, narrow leaf triggerplant; *Suaeda australis*, austral seablite; *Swainsona lessertiiifolia*, coast poisonpea; *Tasmannia lanceolata*, mountain pepper; *Tetragonia implexicoma*, bower spinach; *Thelionema* sp., white lily; *Thelymitra flexuosa*, twisted sun orchid; *Viola hederacea*, ivyleaf violet; *Wahlenbergia* sp., bluebell; *Westringia brevifolia*, native rosemary; *Xanthorrhoea australis*, southern grasstree; *Xerochrysum papillosum*, cliff everlasting daisy; *Zieria arborescens*, stinkwood;

**Birds** ~ *Alauda arvensis*, skylark; *Ardea alba*, great egret; *Cacomantis flabelliformis*, fan-tailed cuckoo; *Calidris ruficollis*, red-necked stints; *Calyptorhynchus funereus*, yellow-tailed black cockatoo; *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*, Cape Barren Geese; *Charadrius ruficapillus*, red-capped plover; *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*, silver gull; *Chrysococcyx lucidus*, shining bronze cuckoo; *Circus approximans*, swamp harrier; *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*, banded stilts; *Colluricincla harmonica*, grey shrike-thrush; *Coracina novaehollandiae*, black-faced cuckoo-shrike; *Corvus tasmanicus*, forest raven; *Cygnus atratus*, black swan; *Egretta novaehollandiae*, white-faced heron; *Elsyornis melanops*, black-fronted dotterel; *Epthianura albifrons*, white fronted chat; *Falco longipennis*, Australian hobby; *F. peregrinus*, peregrine falcon; *Gallinula tenebrosa*, dusky moorhen; *Gymnorhina tibicen*, Australian magpie; *Haematopus fuliginosus*, sooty oystercatcher; *H. longirostris*, pied oystercatcher; *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, white-bellied sea-eagle; *Larus pacificus*, pacific gull; *Lichenostomus flavicollis*, yellow-throated honeyeater; *Malurus cyaneus*, superb fairy-wren; *Megalurus gramineus*, little grassbird; *Meleagris gallopavo*, wild turkey (i); *Microcarbo melanoleucos*, little pied cormorant; *Ninox novaeseelandiae*, southern boobook; *Pachycephala pectoralis*, golden whistler; *Pavo cristatus*, indian peafowl (i); *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, Australian pelican; *Petroica multicolour*, scarlet robin; *Phalacrocorax carbo*, great cormorant; *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*, black-faced cormorant; *P. sulcirostris*, little black cormorant; *Phaps chalcoptera*, common bronze-wing; *Phasianus colchicus*, common pheasant (i); *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*, new holland honeyeater; *P. pyrropterus*, crescent honeyeater; *Platycercus caledonicus*,

green rosella; *Porphyrio porphyrio*, purple swamp hen; *Stagonopleura bella*, beautiful firetail; ? *Sterna caspia*, caspian tern; *Sternula nereis*, fairy tern ; *Strepera fuliginosa*, black currawong; *Tadorna tadornoides*, Australian shelduck; *Vanellus miles*, masked lapwing.

**Insect** ~ *Agonoscelis rutila*, horehound bug; *Chlenias zonaea*, pine looper; *Opodiphthera Helena*, Helena gum moth

**Beach** ~ *Anthopleura aureoradiata*, anemone; *Cellana solida*, orange-edged limpet; *Codium fragile*, sea velvet; *Haliotis* sp., small abalone; *Hormosira banksia*, Neptune's necklace; *Limnoperna* sp., mussel; *Meridiastra gunnii*, purple six-armed star; *Mictyris platycheles*, dark blue soldier crab; *Nerita melanotragus*, black nerite; *Galeolaria caespitosa*, tube worms; *Siphonaria diemenensis*, Van Dieman's siphon shell.

**Fungus** ~ *Fomes* sp., hoof fungus; Orange bracket fungus

**Fauna** ~ *Macropus rufogriseus*, Bennett's wallaby; *Tachyglossus aculeatus*, echidna (pale colouring); *Thylogale billardierii*, Tasmanian pademelon; *Vombatus ursinus*, common wombat; snake

**Frog** ~ *Crinia signifera*, common froglet; *Limnodynastes dumerilii insularis*, southern banjo frog;

## SKEMPS DAY ~ Watermonitoring ~ Sunday 25 October

Twelve members visited Skemps today for the bi-annual macroinvertebrate monitoring on sunny day with a cool breeze. With our monitoring co-ordinator John absent today, Noel headed off by himself to collect the water sample from the riffle in the bush area below Bob's Bog. He found it slow going to collect the sample and move about in the creek on his own with the net and pail, stating this was definitely a two person job. A cup of the sample was diluted with some clean creek water and left to settle before further investigation. Having been told that echidna had been seen from the kitchen window some members walked down the paddock to investigate. They found four echidnas two of which were quite large and they hurried away while a third disappeared down a burrow and a smaller one stayed for us to photograph.

Back at the Centre we looked through our water samples and collected bugs which were sorted into containers for identification. The gas barbecue was lit at the appropriate time for the usual comerardy as we cooked our meat and an interesting array of hot treats.

After lunch Judith had set the microscope up, and with help from the key in *The Waterbug Book* by John Gooderham and Edward Tsyrlin, we were able to identify the following and also take magnified images using the microscope with a lens adapter and Judith's camera.

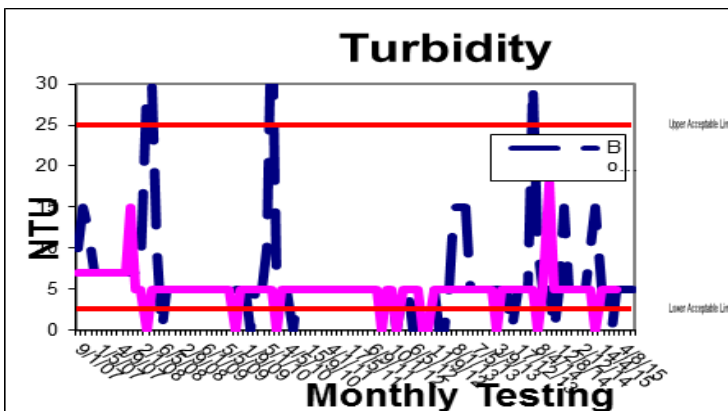
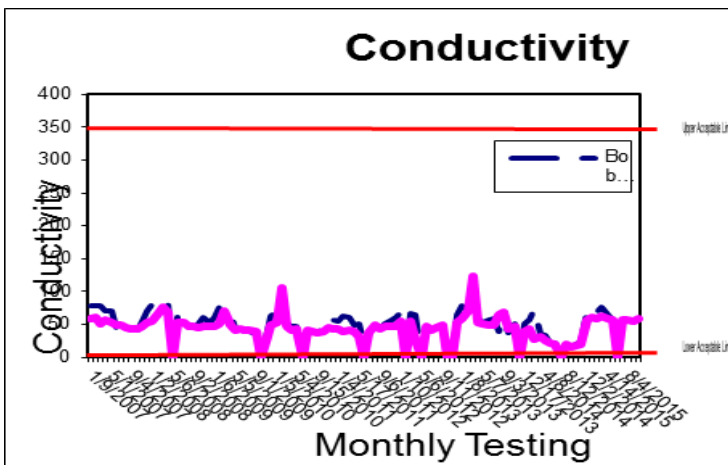
Coleoptera	Beetles
Diptera	True flies
Ephemeroptera	Mayflies
Hemiptera	True bugs (Backswimmers, Waterstriders)
Neuroptera	Lacewings
Odonata	Dragonflies, Damselflies
Plecoptera	Stoneflies
Trichoptera	Caddisflies

Tina, Tom and Judith visited the four areas where we had planted shrubs and grasses during the recent National Tree Day. With very little rain since they were

planted a good soaking was given to them all. When they returned there was some discussion on the merits of diverting a natural spring near the Bedfordia Track by digging a trench to allow water to soak the plants put in there.

Following a last hot drink and with the equipment put back in place, everyone headed home.  
Karen Manning

John has since advised that the above taxa of 7 and a Signal 2 Score of 5.8 is typical for the site monitored. Most results from this site indicate either excellent water quality or good water quality. The number of taxa seen is the most common for this site. He recently conducted the monthly conductivity and salinity testing below Bob's Bog and at the Bottom Falls and has advised that the results for both sites had stayed within acceptable limits, see graphs below.



## GENERAL MEETING NOVEMBER ~

Guest Speaker ~ Ralph Cooper ~ *Wading Birds in Catastrophic Decline*

Tom introduced Ralph Cooper who was to talk on wading birds and the decline of the migratory ones visiting Tasmania.

Before the talk began Ralph told us that the best place to look for wading birds was Kelso during the high tide. On Sunday it was not going to a very good high tide and it was around 9 in the morning. We quickly changed the venue and arranged an early start to the field trip.

Ralph started with an identification parade of the main waders to be found in Tasmania and explained that he preferred the term waders to shore birds (USA term) as many did not go near the sea anyway.

His descriptions were accompanied by slides and we saw the pied oyster catcher and nests with eggs. Oyster catchers are coming inland and one pair chose a woodheap for their nest. Another pair has been seen at Legana and would involve switching prey, perhaps choosing worms and invertebrates and this pair was successful at bringing up young.

Sooty oyster catcher and although we can expect to see them at Kelso, they are birds of the reef rather than the sand. The red capped plover is universal and every continent has one closely related to ours; Ralph named one from Spain and another from the United States. Our red capped plover is all over Australia and when stationary it is hard to see in the sandy habitat it prefers.

The stints were described as visitors from Siberia and we could expect to see around 150. Although he had a picture of a sanderling we would not see it along the Tamar, it could be seen on the east coast. Ralph had seen four Turnstones at Kelso and the Knots he described as in severe decline throughout the world. We could expect to see six Bar-Tailed Godwits at Kelso and he described how they got here from the northern tundra using a drawing on the white board to illustrate this.

The first rough circle was the arctic area as we looked down on the earth from above the North Pole. The thin strip around the edge of this was the Tundra, which Ralph described as alive with insects in the northern summer and many migratory birds use this time for their breeding season. Global warming has seen the insect swarming happen up to three weeks earlier in Hudson Bay and the migratory birds cannot adapt. After a question from a member Ralph told us that, yes, this had happened before during the ice age although it had happened slowly then. The birds could not cope with the speed with which it was happening with global warming.

Ralph spoke of the North American Flyway as an example of man really stuffing things up. The screen image, which showed what looked like a trilobite, was a dinner plate sized horse shoe crab which produced 80,000 eggs and these eggs were an excellent food for the little birds. In the late 1800s the crab was being harvested in the hundreds of tons and being processed into fish meal, fertiliser.

The bird population fell as a result and recovered with the introduction of other fertilisers. Then in the 1990s local fisherman discovered that chunks of the crabs made excellent bait. The Knots went from around 100,000 to an all-time low of 12,000 in 2005. Ralph thought that legislation in the states around the area had solved the problem.

He told us how the Knots, in readiness for the northern migration starting from the southern most parts of South America, doubled their weight by adding fat. He also told us of the other energy and weight saving methods they used to get to Delaware Bay as a staging stop on the way to the Tundra. If the food was not there

they then could not reach the northern breeding grounds and the numbers dropped.

Ralph then spoke of the double banded plover which comes to us from New Zealand in our winter. It was realised that the banding of birds had so many combinations that individual birds could be identified and that between 1986 and 1989 one bird was seen in the Tamar Estuary on four occasions. The plastic bands become brittle and broke off and the study ended so it is not known if it visited other years. The study did show that most of these birds visiting Tasmania come from the South Island of New Zealand even though they also breed on the North Island.

As they are so large, Bar-tailed Godwits can carry satellite transmitters, costing \$3,000 each, and the birds can be tracked on the journey from their breeding grounds to Tasmania and back again. The entire 11,500 km journey along the north south pacific flyway takes nine days nonstop at an average of around 53 kph.

Ralph, David Henderson and someone from James Cook University (doing an ongoing study associated with the Iron Barron grounding on Hebe Reef) have been doing bird surveys at George Town since 1976. He told us that the Eastern Curlew is on the critically endangered list. In 1976 there was around 180, by 1981 he was thinking it was a bad breeding season, 1993...well not too bad, by 2003 there were 44, 2010 down to 22, down to 11 at the start of this year and on Friday he expects to find six.

The problem is the Yellow Sea in Korea and the former Saemangeum wetlands. With the construction of a 30 kilometre sea wall the tidal shallows and all the molluscs which migrating birds need to refuel disappeared as the bay was reclaimed. In Ralphs words 'further north from Korea, whipping around toward Beijing and the whole of the Yellow Sea area, is the most populated part of China. There are new ports, there are oil refineries, there's pollution, there's new towns, there's cities, there's movement, it's all gone.'

He told us that 73% of viable wader refuelling stops have gone. The birds get to the Yellow Sea and there is not enough food and many die. Again he pointed out that this had happened before during the ice age but that birds are used to slow change over centuries and it is happening over decades. He spoke of the decline of other birds which he had recorded, including the Bar-Tailed Godwit and the Curlew Sandpiper which can no longer be seen.

We learned that Tasmania, being at the end of the migration trail, had fewer birds and it was therefore easier to gauge any decline. He stated 'These counts will be pretty accurate, no problem, when people do counts in the Brisbane area or far north Queensland they're trying to get in tune with flocks of thousands. So they miss a few thousand for a couple of years you know you can put that down to observer bias or not enough observers, in Tasmania not so...this is real.'

Following a few member questions Ralph told us that if we saw a stint with an orange leg tag it had touched down in Victoria and then continued on to Tasmania. Another question led him to tell us that at the halfway stage between the northern Tundra and Tasmania some birds went through an energy intensive half moult, another reason they tended to as Ralph said 'drop off the planet.'

Some of the wader group members have been going to China and educating the locals and giving them rewards for spotting colour bands rather than shooting them. He joked 'You know, instead of having stint and fried rice, give me a few shekels instead if you report it'.

After further questions Ralph posed the question about why the new birds do not head off to Macquarie Island instead of stopping in Tasmania. The adults abandon the young and return to Tasmania and the young end up here as well. He talked about



what is theorised as genetic memory. Without ever having been here before they find their way to Tasmania.

Further questions had Ralph talking about odd sightings of birds in places you would not expect to see them to which he stated that these added nothing to the science of ornithology, they were just blow ins that happened occasionally.

John thanked Ralph for a very interesting talk and members showed their appreciation.

Noel Manning

## **FIELD TRIP ~ Kelso Shorebirds & Badger Head wildflowers ~ Sunday 8 November**

Ten members and visitor Bruce Fuhrer from Victoria, met at the end of The Esplanade (officially Foreshore Drive) at Kelso, including 18 month old new junior member, Abigail, with her dad Danny for a look at the waders of the lower reaches of the Tamar. We were appreciative that a local dog owner delayed his walk so that the dogs did not disturb the birds while we did our identification and count.

Our walk along the foreshore saw most members laying in the deep sea weed at the high water mark discussing (arguing about) the identity of the small birds feeding at the waters edge. With the main features identified, with difficulty due to their habit of fast movement, including dark legs and short straight beaks, we decided that these were either the sanderling (21cm) or the red necked stint (15cm). Most agreed that they seemed smaller than 21cm and then Prue suggested there were two species in this group.

A few members walked further along the beach to look for more birds, those staying walked with visitor Bruce as he identified sea weeds which added an extra element to the field trip.



Christine, Danny and Abigail looking at seaweeds  
on Kelso beach with Bruce Fuhrer

While three members headed home or to other commitments the rest moved to Badger Head for a very early lunch and our annual walk to look at the recovery of the area after a fire some four years ago.

As Bruce was unable to handle the steep walk to the upper reaches, we drove back along the road looking for the areas of abundant long purpleflag for him to photograph. White flag iris, stackhousia and trigger plants were also in abundance along the gravel road into Badger Head.

Roy, John, Prue, Karen, Danny and Abigail set off up the track behind the carpark, finding hop native-primrose growing up the side of hill, last year we had seen kangaroo apple growing in the same area. The slender velvetbush growing next to the rocky steep steps which looked lovely last year was not looking so good, however the small eucalypts growing abundantly were now about 2 metres high. Flowering plants were photographed and it was agreed that there was less in flower at this time.



*Dillwynia sericea*, showy parrot pea

They walked for an hour and a half then headed back not wanting to keep Bruce and myself waiting too long. Little Abigail had kept everyone entertained during the walk with her chitter chatter and little songs. We followed up with a coffee and a home-made treat provided by Prue and discussed the identification of the saltmarsh plants on the edge of the carpark.

With the others heading home Bruce, John, Karen, Prue and myself headed for York Town, first to walk a friends bush block and garden with a stream running through it and then to look at the replanting at the York Town site. After a satisfying field trip which was longer than expected we took Bruce to his Westbury accommodation before heading home.

Noel Manning



Prue, Bruce, Noel and John deep in conversation.

### Kelso

**Birds** ~ *Anas superciliosa*, pacific black duck; *Calidris alba*, sanderling; *C. ruficollis*, red-necked stint; *Charadrius ruficapillus*, red-capped plover; *Cygnus atratus*, black swan; *Egretta novaehollandiae*, white-faced heron; *Haematopus fuliginosus*, sooty oystercatcher; *H. longirostris*, pied oystercatcher; *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, white-bellied sea-eagle; *Microcarbo melanoleucos*, little pied cormorant; *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*, little black cormorant; *Thinornis rubricollis*, hooded plover; *Vanellus miles*, masked lapwing;

**Seaweeds** ~ *Codium fragile*, velvetweed; *Cystophora* sp., brown seaweed; *Gracilaria* sp., red algae; *Hormosira banksia*, neptunes necklace; *Leathesia difformis*, leatherweed; *Metagoniolithon* sp., red seaweed; *Sargassum* sp., brown seaweed; *Ulva compressa*, baitweed.

### Badger Head

**Flora** ~ *Acacia myrtifolia*, redstem wattle; *A. suaveolens*, sweet wattle; *A. verticillata* subsp *verticillata*, prickly moses; *Acaena novae-zelandiae*, common buzzy; *Acotriche serrulata*, ants delight; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, black sheoak; *Amperea xiphoclada*, broom spurge; *Aotus ericoides*, golden pea; *Baloskion tetraphyllum*, tassel cordrush; *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Billardiera mutabilis*, appleberry; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Caladenia* sp., orchid; *Cassitha glabella*, slender dodderlaurel; *C. melantha*, large dodderlaurel; *Centaurea* sp; *Comesperma calymega*, bluespike milkwort; *C. volubile*, blue lovecreeper; ? *Cyathodes glauca*, purple cheeseberry; *Davesia ulicifolia*, yellow spiky bitterpea; *Dianella revoluta*, spreading flaxlily; *Dichondra repens*, kidneyweed; *Dillwynia glaberrima*, smooth parrotpea; *D. sericea*, showy parrotpea; *Diplareena moraea*, white flag-iris; *Epacris impressa*, common heath; *Eucalyptus amygdalina*, black peppermint; *Gahnia grandis*, cutting

grass; *Gompholobium huegelii*, common wedgepea; *Gonocarpus* sp., raspwort; *G. tetragynus*, common raspwort; *Goodenia lanata*, trailing native-primrose; *Goodia lotifolia*, smooth goldentip; *Hibbertia acicularis*, prickly guineaflower; *H. procumbens*, spreading guineaflower; *H. riparia*, erect guineaflower; *H. sericea*, silky guineaflower; *Kennedia prostrata*, running postman; *Lasiopetalum bauera*, slender velvetbush; *Lepidosperma* sp., sedge; *Leptospermum scoparium*, common tea-tree; *Leucopogon australis*, spike beardheath; *L. virgatus*, twiggy beardheath; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Lomatia tinctoria*, guitarplant; *Melaleuca ericifolia*, coast paperbark; *Monotoca elliptica*, tree broomheath; *Notelaea lingustrina*, native olive; *Olearia lirata*, forest daisybush; *Patersonia fragilis*, short purpleflag; *P. occidentalis*, long purpleflag; *Persoonia juniperina* sp., geebung; *Pimelea humilis*, dwarf riceflower; *P. linifolia*, slender riceflower; *Platylobium triangulare*, ivy flat pea; *Pomaderris* sp., dogwood (small round leaf); *P. elliptica*, yellow dogwood; *Pteridium esculentum*, bracken; *Pultenaea daphnoides*, heartleaf bushpea; *Rhagodia candolleana*, coastal saltbush; *Senecio biserratus*, jagged fireweed; *Stackhousia monogyna*, forest candles; *Stylidium graminifolium*, narrowleaf triggerplant; ? *Suaeda australis*, austral seablite; *Tetragonia implexicoma*, bower spinach; *Wahlenbergia stricta*, tall bluebell; *Xanthorrhoea australis*, southern grass tree; *Xanthosia pilosa*, woolly crossherb.

**Reptiles** ~ *Tympanocryptis diemensis*, mountain dragon; Snake, greeny grey colour  
**Birds** ~ *Acanthiza pusilla*, brown thornbill; *Calyptorhynchus funereus*, yellow-tailed black-cockatoo; *Coracina novaehollandiae*, black-faced cuckoo-shrike; *Rhipidura albiscapa*, grey fantail; *Sericornis humilis*, Tasmanian scrubwren

## QVMAG BUG DAY OUT @ SKEMPS ~ Sunday 15 November

Members arrived early at Skemps today to make the Centre and selected areas of the property ready for families attending the QVMAG Bug Day Out. Our first job was to clean the plastic tables and chairs stored outside, place signage at specific points and set up the trestle tables for activities.

Around 11.30 David Maynard and Simon Fearn arrived and brought equipment and specimens into the Centre and half-filled the fridge with bottles of water. Once the other staff arrived and set up we had a bite to eat and had a get-together at 12.30 for introductions, last minute instructions and to discuss who was doing what.

Cars started to arrive at 1pm and Tina and Tom T directed drivers into the parking area and welcomed families to the property. Of all the families spoken to, only one family had visited the property before and had stayed overnight recently. From there David talked to the families about hazards on the property e.g. snakes, jack jumpers and to keep children away from the ponds, before directing them to the activities provided.

Simon was taking groups to find and catch insects for identification, John Douglas' group were looking for spiders, Kathryn Pugh had a group looking at waterbugs at the Top Pond, Tammy Gordon and Helen Jones had set up craft activities in the Centre and Jennifer Rowlands was painting insects and flowers on the arms of the children and some of the adults. Participants also got to hold an eagles wing and could feel how the wing is buffeted in the wind.

Our members were involved in different ways with Judith manning microscopes to show what had been found in greater detail. She was also able to put things up on her computer screen for a better look. Members took turns to organise hot and cold

drinks and chat with our guests. Noel and I walked a group around the Watergate Track with the children busy collecting insects as we went. This gave us time to answer questions about the Club, the property and its history and the individual plants we saw. When we walked along the fence of the Federation Corridor, I explained our project of recycling the fencing to protect other plants on the property so they can get established. At the bottom of the Federation Corridor one of the children saw the burrowing crayfish sign so we continued on to show the mounds and Noel gave a talk about them. As it was close to 3pm, we walked the group over to Kathryn's tent at the Top Pond to look at the bugs in the water sample.

Walking back to the Centre on the far side of the creek, we looked at the regrowth of *Epacris gunnii* which had been enclosed in recycled fencing about a year ago. We were able to compare it to a plant nearby which was still being browsed, showing that it had been worth the effort.

Some families didn't appear to be in a hurry to leave, it was a lovely afternoon and while they were happy to stay and chat, we didn't mind. With many hands available, the tidying up didn't really take long after which we called it a day.

Karen Manning

### **FIELD TRIP ~ Saltmarsh Wetlands Monitoring @ Bakers Beach with Vishnu Prahalad ~ Tuesday 17 November**

Four members met Vishnu at the car park at Bakers Beach to be instructed in monitoring of a saltmarsh wetland. We were joined by Megan Dykman who is the Natural Resource Management (NRM) North Tamar facilitator. After introductions and a casual chat around the cars we moved to the nearest shelter for an informative instruction session with Vishnu.

Armed with maps, aerial photographs, diagrams and charts Vishnu explained the importance of the saltmarsh wetlands and stated that these areas were little recognised as important habitats. Even though they were a nationally listed ecosystem second only to lowland grasslands the state government concentrated on forests and the marine environment due to the economic importance of these areas. Vishnu acknowledged the importance of NRM North in assisting with the project including providing some of the resources used to identify the saltmarsh wetlands in the area as well as to identify the flora and fauna of these important habitats.

We learned that behind the areas of sea surge were the saltmarsh wetlands with brackish water coming from tidal sea water, saline ground water or even sea spray. If the salt level was not high enough then it would be classed as a fresh water marsh which could be distinguished by having water ribbons (triglochin) present.

Vishnu showed us a chart of the various components we could expect to find in a typical saltmarsh. Plants were the first, most obvious and important element. Where you find certain plants you have a saltmarsh and he would start our instruction by explaining these plants.

He told us that he was working with the Cradle Coast NRM to map the saltmarsh wetlands in the north west of the state to bring it in line with the other areas. The survey would be done over the coming summer and a book would be available soon on the wetlands of the North West. There would then be a book for each NRM area of the state.

As he worked his way up the chart starting with land and soil the plants were the first community and the second was the insects and marine creatures such as

crabs and molluscs. He said these were very important as fish fed off the crab and insect larvae, making these wetlands fish nurseries. Tasmania was too cold for the mangroves which were fish nurseries in other parts of Australia making these wetlands important to the fishing industry.



Prue, Tina & Vishnu looking for birds on the wetland

While we were encouraged to do the monitoring in summer Vishnu told us that a winter survey was important to establish the seasonal difference in the bird population. It would take two years to have enough data to say something more concrete about bird usage of salt marshes and ten years before we have enough to show historical trends.

While we had access to an excellent poster listing the birds, Vishnu told us that a similar publication for plants was still being looked at with feedback suggesting a different format.

Vishnu told us that human activity needed to be monitored with grazing, four wheel drive activity, land clearing and rubbish dumping being serious issues and that humans were the greatest and most immediate threat to these wetlands. We also learned that each individual wetland was important and independent of what was happening in wetlands elsewhere.

Historical records of wetlands go back to the late 40s when aerial photography improved after the Second World War and these have established the extent of wetlands for a sixty year period. There have been huge losses since then mainly due to farming activity.

Prue suggested we had not improved as 20 years ago there were 25 birds on the threatened species list and that now there were 36 while Vishnu explained that the mobility of birds meant that we did not know much about their habitat requirements. Vishnu noted that his bird book did not mention if birds inhabited wetlands because most had trees which made it difficult to see them and that these books did not distinguish between the various wetlands. We discussed the fact that saltmarsh wetlands had few tall, impressive plants and would not stand out to the casual observer.

Vishnu explained that his aerial surveys had established that certain areas, based on colour, were either saltmarsh wetlands or areas of rice grass, and that a follow up on the ground was necessary. Sometimes the colour in an aerial photograph which suggested a saltmarsh, turned out to be bracken. Using aerial photographs Vishnu pointed to areas he considered to be marshes and others which were sand flats.

The aerial photographs showed the levees which excluded the salt water from some areas for former farm land and Vishnu explained that breaking these levees could restore the wetlands and explained the various benefits of this. We even learned that it was advisable to let the sea back into areas of the Netherlands.



*Samolus repens*, creeping brookweed and  
*Angianthus preissianus*, salt cupflower

Heading west across the creek we started our monitoring exercise within walking distance of the car park. Getting to the edge of the wetlands we first looked for and tried to identify the birds. We also noted the kangaroos grazing in the wetlands as well. Having finished the bird survey we moved onto the wetland to list the plants there. Vishnu was a wealth of information, not only quickly identifying the plants, he also pointing out the identifying features. Taking longer than expected eventually we returned to the car park for a very late lunch over which Vishnu gave more information about the project to raise awareness of the saltmarsh wetlands.

After lunch we drove in two cars to the western end of the Narawntapu National Park to do another monitoring exercise on the wetlands near the camping area. While the first site was the lowlands of a tidal creek this area was a coastal saltmarsh wetlands, a thin strip between the dry land and the waters of Port Sorell. Vishnu noted that some of the *Tecticornia* were similar in size to the largest he had seen which were at Moulting Lagoon, another saltmarsh wetlands and a Ramsar Site. The largest we found was over two metres tall and around four metres across and Vishnu told us that these were slow growing shrubs and that we were looking at a plant up to perhaps four hundred years old.

Returning to the car park we purchased an excellent poster of wetlands birds and chatted with Vishnu before reluctantly heading home. Most of us would see Vishnu again at the Australian Plant Society talk he was to give that evening.

Noel Manning

### Area One

**Birds** ~ ? *Anthus novaeseelandiae*, Richard's pipit, *Egretta novaehollandiae*, white-faced heron, *Epthianura albifrons*, white-fronted chat, *Haematopus longirostris*, pied oystercatcher x10, *Hirundo neoxena*, welcome swallow, *Larus novaehollandiae*, silver gulls, *Megalurus gramineus*, little grassbird, unidentified bird of prey

**Mammals** ~ *Macropus giganteus*, forester kangaroo x 4, 2 with joeys

**Crustaceans** ~ crabs on mudflats

**Flora** ~ *Angianthus preissianus*, salt cupflower; *Apodasmia brownii*, coarse twinerush; *Atriplex prostrata*, creeping orache; *Austrostipa stipoides*, coast speargrass; *Cotula* sp., buttons; *Disphyma crassifolium*, roundleaf pigface; *Distichlis distichophylla*, Australian saltgrass; *Gahnia* sp., sawsedge; *Hemichroa pentandra*, trailing saltstar; *Isolepis cernua*, nodding clubsedge; ? *Juncus revolutus*, creeping rush; ? *Juncus* sp with lovely flower; *Oxalis* sp., very small yellow flower; *Plantago coronopus* subsp *coronopus*, slender buckshorn plantain; *Poa* spp., tussockgrass; *Samolus repens* var. *repens*, creeping brookweed; *Sarconcornia blackiana*, thickhead glasswort; *S. quinqueflora* subsp. *quinqueflora*, beaded glasswort; *Spartina anglica*, common cordgrass (ricegrass); *Spergularia tasmanica*, greater seaspurrey; *Sporobolus virginicus*, salt couch; *Tecticornia arbuscular*, shrubby glasswort;

**Insects** ~ Bumble bee, grasshopper, lady beetle, moths, *Chauliognathus lugubris* soldier beetle, spider web in *Austrostipa stipoides*, coast speargrass

**Observations** ~ wombat holes observed with some fresh scats close by

### Area Two

**Birds** ~ *Anas castanea*, chestnut teal x2, *Charadrius ruficapillus*, red-capped plovers x2, *Cygnus atratus*, black swans, *Egretta novaehollandiae*, white-faced heron x5, *Epthianura albifrons*, white-fronted chat x1, *Haematopus longirostris*, pied oystercatcher x5 pair +3, *Hirundo neoxena*, welcome swallow x2, *Larus novaehollandiae*, silver gull x1, *Numenius madagascariensis*, eastern curlew x2, *Malurus cyaneus*, superb fairy wrens, *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, Australian pelican x5, *Phalacrocorax* sp, black cormorants, *P. melanoleucos*, little pied cormorants x2,

**Flora** ~ *Acacia longifolia* subsp. *sophorae*, coast wattle; *Atriplex prostrata*, creeping orache; *Austrostipa stipoides*, coast speargrass; *Chenopodium glaucum*, pale goose-foot; *Dichondra repens*, kidneyweed; *Disphyma crassifolium*, roundleaf pigface; *Hemichroa pentandra*, trailing saltstar; *Juncus* sp., rush; *Rhagodia candolleana* subsp *candolleana*, coastal saltbush; *Samolus repens* var. *repens*, creeping brookweed; *Sarcocornia blackiana*, thickhead glasswort; *S. quinqueflora*, beaded glasswort; *Selliera radicans*, shiny swampmat; *Senecio* sp., fireweed; *Tecticornia arbuscular*, shrubby glasswort; *Tetragonia implexicoma*, bower spinach

**Fish** ~ Ray in water x1, toad fish x6

**Observations** ~ Crab holes in the mudflats, trail bike tyre marks on the mudflats

## FEDERATION WEEKEND ~ March 11 - 14, 2016 ~ Gowrie Park

Launceston Field Naturalists Club will be hosting the next Federation Weekend. This is being held early in the year (on the long week-end in March 2016 - Friday



11<sup>th</sup>-Monday 14<sup>th</sup>), to avoid clashing with ANN in spring. Given the time of year, the main theme of the weekend will be environmental interactions and drivers of diversity, but we will also delve a little more into the undergrowth, and into methodology of investigation and classification of what we find.

We will have the Gowrie Park Wilderness Village as accommodation and base, from which we can access excursions to a wide range of climatic zones containing a variety of geological features. These include open sclerophyll, rainforest, and alpine. The preliminary program includes one day comparing diverse habitats in the Mole Creek area, and one day visiting Devil's Gullet and the associated alpine flora, with stops to compare the flora and associated micro fauna as we climb.

### **Draft Itinerary:**

**Friday afternoon** arrive, byo dinner and refreshments.

**Friday evening:** welcome and discussion on objectives and methodology (details to be advised).

**Saturday:** Field trip as above (probably Devil's Gullet)

Saturday or Sunday evening dinner: (depending on numbers): BBQ or dinner at the function room of the Old Black Stump Restaurant (Formerly Weindorfers Restaurant)

**Saturday evening** guest speaker: Bob Mesibov. "*Taxonomy Ain't What It Used To Be*".

Bob Mesibov is an Honorary Research Associate at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. He has described or redescribed more than 170 species of native millipedes from NSW, Qld, SA, Tas, Vic and the NT, and is the compiler of the millipede section of the Australian Faunal Directory and the online catalogue, 'Millipedes of Australia'.

The talk will look back at the remarkable changes in zoological taxonomy over the past 15 years, plus Bob's adventures chasing small creatures in out-of-the-way places.

**Sunday:** Field trip as above (probably Mole Creek)

**Sunday evening dinner:** BBQ or Black Stump Restaurant

**Monday:** Book out, with optional activities to be advised for those not travelling far.

We look forward to hearing from any one attending who can lead brief field discussions on any of the flora or fauna groups we will encounter.

### **Accommodation:**

The Gowrie Park Wilderness Village has variety of accommodation options. We will have exclusive use of the bunkhouse, with large communal dining / meeting room and communal kitchen.

The bunk-house contains 14 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms, \$25 / adult / night.

Bedrooms contain a mixture of bunks and single beds, but all providing 2 or 3 singles without the use of top bunks.

For those who may want a more self contained option, there are also 4 self-contained cabins that sleep 6 (queen + 2 sets bunks). These are \$110 night including linen, but will not be held, so first in, first served.

There is overflow backpackers accommodation if we fill up the bunk-house (\$35 / night, bring or hire linen).

Powered & unpowered camping sites also available.

Booking can be made directly with the park on 03-64911385 (be sure to mention LFNC group booking).

To view accommodation options, go to <http://www.gowriepark.com.au/tasmanian-accommodation.html>

For menu of Black Stump Restaurant see <http://theoldblackstump.com.au/our-menu/> (For an organised function involving larger numbers and a dedicated function room there will be a more limited choice arranged beforehand, such as alternate drop, to facilitate timely delivery of all meals.

## **FIELD TRIP ~ Ben Lomond National Park**

~ Saturday 23 to Monday 25 January 2016

Members are invited to attend this two day field trip to Ben Lomond National Park where we will be staying at the Borrowdale Ski Chalet.

This is a very interesting place to visit with many walks varying in length and difficulty, great photographic opportunities of an unusual terrain and the wildflowers will hopefully be looking good at this that of year. If an overnight stay is not for you, come for the day and explore this wonderful area.

Please contact Peter Warren on 6339 2671 if you would like to reserve a bed. You will need to bring a sleeping bag or sheets and blankets, pillows and enough food and drink for your stay, the closest shop is approximately 50 kilometres away.

Discuss the cost of day visits and overnight stays with Peter. The temperature and weather can change quite quickly, so be prepared for all types of weather and don't forget your camera.

As this visit is to a national park, all cars need to display a current Parks Pass.

## **DONATION REQUEST**

The Tasmanian Land Conservancy has asked for support to protect Panatana, a 231 hectare parcel of land on the Rubicon Estuary, some five kilometres from the Nawrantapu National Park.

“Panatana’s complex and diverse environment has layer upon layer of vitally important habitat and is rich with life:

- Endangered swamp paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) forests cling to the shoreline of the Rubicon Estuary
- A cast of birds, from delicate robins and honeyeaters, to top-order white-bellied sea eagles and grey goshawks patrol overhead
- Diverse eucalypt forests and woodlands support coastal heaths and majestic stands of grasstrees
- On the forest floor, intricate fungi and lichens take charge in many colours and forms
- With tell tail footprints and scats, signs of the endangered Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisi*), are dotted across Panatana”

Your donation will contribute to the protection of Panatana. Donate online at [www.tasland.org.au](http://www.tasland.org.au) or to find out more contact them on (03) 6225 1399 or go to [www.tasland.org.au/panatana](http://www.tasland.org.au/panatana)

## **Additional Information**

### **Club Outings:**

1. All outings depart from Inveresk carpark (near Museum entrance) at 9 am unless otherwise specified. Internet site updated regularly to reflect short notice changes. Saturday all-day parking cost is \$3.00. Sunday parking free.
2. You need to provide your own food and drinks for the outing unless otherwise specified.
3. When travelling by car in convoy, each driver is responsible to ensure that the vehicle behind is in sight immediately after passing each cross road or fork in the road.
4. When car pooling, petrol costs should be shared between all the passengers, including family of the driver, and based on other clubs the Committee suggested \$11 per 100 km. This is a guideline only.

**Name Tags:** Name tags are to be worn at meetings and on outings.

**Tea/Coffee:** A levy of 50c is currently charged for supper provided at meetings.

**Field Centre:** All members have access to the John Skemp Field Centre. Contact our booking manager, John Elliott on 6344 9303 regarding availability and keys.

**Field Centre Phone Number** - 6399 3361

**Postal Address:** PO Box 1072 Launceston 7250

**Internet site :** <http://www.lfnc.org.au>

**E.mail :** [secretary@lfnc.org.au](mailto:secretary@lfnc.org.au)