

# 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 XLVI I I No. 3**

**February/March 2015**

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<b>Committee</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Ms Campbell, Mr Geeves, Ms McGlynn, Mr Ralph, Ms Wright, Mr Warren</b>

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

## PROGRAM

### APRIL

- Tuesday 7**                    **General Meeting: Cancelled**
- Sunday 19**                **Field Trip: Eucalypt regeneration at Cressy with Tanya Bailey**
- Sunday 26**                **Skemp Day: Water Monitoring**

### MAY

- Tuesday 5**                **JOHN SKEMP MEMORIAL LECTURE**  
**Speaker: Mike Douglas**
- Sunday 10**                **Field Trip: Bridport area with Mike Douglas**
- Saturday 30**              **Skemp Day: Fungi**

### JUNE

- Tuesday 2**                **General Meeting: Guest speakers Peter Tonelli and Alison Dugand - *Raptor identification***
- TBA**                        **Field Trip: To be advised**
- Sunday 21**                **Skemp Day: Ferns**

The full January to June program available at  
<http://www.lfnc.org.au/meetings.htm>

## Skemp Report February/March

Most of the damage has been repaired and we are waiting on the insurance assessment to get permission to replace the damaged or stolen property.

Rob Mitchelson has used his chainsaw on track maintenance which has also added to our dwindling firewood supplies.

No mowing has been necessary for over a month and it is still looking good.

The barrel heater in the Centre has been refurbished with Peter Warren doing quite a bit of the work which included repairing the door. He called in some favours to organise a piece of metal to replace a burnt out section and to have it rolled to fit the shape of the barrel. The heater has since been used and performs well.

The nature trails are all clear except for any recent falls. If you are at Skemps and do a walk please let us know if you see a blockage or the ferns or bracken which are getting out of hand.

If you can join us on a Tuesday working bee or if you can volunteer to monitor a nature trail please get in contact.

### Puggle

**February** ~ Karen Manning asked members the number of national parks there were in Tasmania, including those on islands? Following many guesses from members, Louise Skabo correctly answered that there were 19 and Karen named them.

**March** ~ Louise stated that her Puggle would see if we had paid attention to Nigel Forteach at the last meeting. Her question to members was to state one of four physical differences between adult damselflies and dragonflies. Prue stated that the eyes of the damselflies were wider spaced than dragonflies.

### Sightings

**February** ~ Noel stated that those in his car had seen up to 8 echidnas on a weekend trip to Miena, although one was a carving on 'The Wall' at Lake St Clair. Nick had seen a blue tongued lizard and Alma a white cockatoo. Peter L had his fruit eaten by birds and he was dive bombed by a spinebill. There was some discussion about what Tina described as cotton wool on a defoliated wattle. Nigel described it as "manna from heaven" as per a Bible story and John said that it was a spittle bug. Tom T showed us a skink in a jar with a native pelagonia. John had seen a *Banksia serrata* in full flower while Tony had seen a wombat at the Vale of Belvoir and a wallaby with a joey and Karen reported 9 or ten potato orchids in one area at Skemps. Nigel reported that musk lorikeets took only 5 hours to completely strip a plum tree of its fruit.

**March** ~ Peter Warren saw magpies chasing a cat which visits his home while Tina saw two copper heads mating. Prue saw devil scats on the Zigzag board walk at Skemps and John saw a spotted tail quoll come out of bush near the Marakoopa Cave while on a walk with the Launceston Walking Club

**Library Report** ~ Tina reported new acquisitions including the book *Seadragons Lair: Threat to Fish Habitat*, and a copy of Dick Burns *Geology and Landforms of Cradle Mountain*. Tina advised that the NRM has produced a free booklet on plants of saltmarsh wetlands.

**New Member** ~ Nicholas Handler was welcomed to the Club in February. We look forward to Nicholas joining us at Club activities.

**GENERAL MEETING ~ GUEST SPEAKER ~ Nigel Forteath ~ *Life at Four Springs Lakes***

Nigel was introduced by Tom Treløgen who was to talk on life at Four Springs Lake. Nigel stated that the lake was developed in 1997 as a recreational fishing area and is not very deep, only six metres near the dam wall. The flora has changes since it was filled and it is a haven for wild fowl and there are sea eagles, harriers and water rats in residence. Nigel showed a photo from the jetty and stated that the water was crystal clear at the moment due to the water plants although it could get quite dirty if the plants died off.

His talk was accompanied by an excellent slide show with included pictures taken the previous day. When injured or orphaned platypus are given to Nigel he hand raises them and puts them in the lake and although it is difficult to raise small orphans he has raised one of only 300 grams. Unfortunately someone reported a sick platypus near the dam and it appeared to have the fungal disease *Mucor*. With the disease in the lake he said he may have to rethink putting them in there.

He spoke of the fish telling us the lake has eels, which are attractive to the eagles, as well as trout for the fisherman. The only native fish he has found are the cucumber smelt, a small fish which goes around the edges of the lake, and there are large numbers of these. Nigel is unsure how this fish ended up in the landlocked lake, possible put there to feed the eels.

He spoke of the variety of birds in and around the lake starting with the native hens in large numbers on the edges of the lake. There are eastern swamp hens, chestnut teal eating mayflies and as there is no shooting the pacific black ducks are very tame. As well there are musk duck, eurasian coot, hoary-headed grebe, welcome swallows and cormorants, flame robins also feeding on mayflies and herons after tadpoles. We learnt that with the abundance of fish, eels and insects the birds did quite well and he had some interesting stories about their feeding habits and antics. While hunting is not a problem people in 4WD cars are. After rain they seem to like the challenge of mud and were difficult to keep off the lake edge even when large rocks are placed in the way.

There are bell frogs which have the largest tadpoles, up to 10cm, and when the frogs croak the snakes move in. Nigel warned us about the snakes and stated that the copperheads would get out of your way although the tigers were reluctant to move so he had to walk around them. There are grass and tree frogs and although he has heard the banjo frog he is yet to see one.

Moving onto the botany of the lake he mentioned two types of spike rush, which is related to the water chestnut, and another water plant *Myriophyllum* which he said was important to the insect life, particularly the backswimmers. He talked about huge stands of a pond weed which dies off and drifts to the edges in late February and fertilizes the pond although it can smell as well. He then showed a picture of a small water plantain, another important plant of the lake, followed by a picture of the introduced invasive Canadian pond weed. This weed has spread throughout Europe and he stated that probably every lake in Tasmania has this weed.

While Nigel had wondered how so many aquatic plants could get into Four Springs Lake in just three years he had recently read a scientific paper showing that some plants do well when the seeds are ingested by water fowl and are then introduced back into the environment through faeces.

Nigel mentioned invertebrate life in the lake starting with, *Megadolomedes australianus*, a big water spider. His photograph was from six years ago and he never dreamed at the time that he was looking at an unnamed species. The next slide showed a dragonfly known to anglers as a mudeye followed by pictures of the nymph case on a rush. Nigel explained how the dragonfly then pulls itself out of the nymph case and uses gravity to pump its wings with blood to inflate them and waits for them to dry relying on warm weather to assist the process. It is highly vulnerable at this stage and currawongs and ravens prey on them.

While looking at an image of a damselfly we were told that the nymph wiggles to move about in the water while the dragonfly nymph squirts out water for propulsion. We were shown images of various damselflies while Nigel described them and gave details of their habits and what he had observed of them followed by images of may flies, again with descriptions and information about habits. Images followed of caddis and Nigel explained that he had little information about them and lacked the time to study them. The last images were of water scorpions, backswimmers, waterboatmen and fresh water shrimp. Nigel explained that due to his deafness he did not realise that the waterboatmen made a lot of noise until he received complaints from the next class about the noise.

Nigel finished with information about freshwater sponges and the sponge flies he has found on two types of sponge in Tasmania.

After question time Judith gave the thanks and asked members to show their appreciation.

Noel Manning

## **MEMBER TALK ~ February 2015 ~ Peter Warren, Graptolites**

Peter introduced us to graptolites which have been discovered on the field naturalist's property at Myrtle Bank. The branched ones are Dendroidea and the other Graptoloidea. They are Silurian from 450 to 410 million years old and there were large numbers of them in the Cambrian from 540 to 490 million years ago. There was a mass extinction during the Ordovician thought to be brought about by an ice age.

Peter described Graptolites as marker fossils which are important to geologists as they accurately date rocks and are widely distributed throughout the world. If the same ones are here and in Victoria or England we know that the rocks are from the same era.

Peter found it exciting to find them at Skemps and the QVMAG staff took away a boot load. Since then a geologist has stayed at Skemps to study the geology of the area and has found more in the north of the state.

Members showed their appreciation and Tom thanked him.

Noel Manning

## **SKEMP DAY ~ Working Bee ~ Sunday 8 February**

Seven members arrived at Skemps today for a short notice working bee.

While Noel and John continued with repairs around the Centre following the break in, Karen checked the assets lists for missing items and Judith walked and cleared the Watergate Track. Judith then went with Karen to clear the East track. On arrival at the Scotch Oakburn adopt-a-patch site, a rather unwell ginger kitten was found under a tree and reluctantly we decided to put it out of its misery. We then proceeded down to the East Track where we found the entrance completely overgrown and had to clear a dense growth of ferns for approximately eight feet. Further along the track we cleared more ferns and branches, before losing the track for a while due to a misplaced directional marker. Back on the track we finished the clearing and headed back to the car and the Centre for lunch which we both felt was well deserved.

In our absence Lynne, Bob M and Irmgard had arrived. While the ladies headed out and cleared the Forest Track, Bob had looked around the buildings on the property and has made some suggestions for further security, which will be investigated.

We all had lunch together and with all the jobs finished by mid-afternoon headed home. Many thanks to all who helped today.

Karen Manning

### **FIELD TRIP ~ Four Springs Lake with Nigel Forteath ~ Saturday 21 February**

After giving a very interesting talk on our meeting night, Professor Nigel Forteath led our February field trip to Four Springs Lake. This lake, in the Rosevale area, is controlled by Inland Fisheries and stocked with trout. It is extensive in area but averages only a little over 2 metres deep. The water was quite warm and, being late Summer, more shallow than normal.

Professor Forteath met us at the lake soon after 9.30 – it was still pleasantly cloudy at that time, but promised to warm up considerably. One of the first things we noted were the thousands of exoskeletons of dragonfly and damselfly nymphs covering the piles and decks of the two jetties and any reeds along the water's edge. We decided to walk before the heat arrived, so we headed ... towards a landmark pointed out to us, with the Professor to meet us there in his dinghy to bring us back. (What uncustomary luxury!) As always we walked heads down and noting flora and fauna along the way. Noel and Tom T forged ahead and when we caught up later they reported disturbing a copperhead snake which stayed around long enough to be photographed.

The land was flat and fairly clear with rushes and sedges protecting the water's edge. We came across a solitary very pretty pink and white orchid, *Spiranthes australis* – a new orchid for us all – and checked out dead tree stumps but noted that there seemed little life there. A wide crack in the ground revealed a large black and orange wasp, which we later identified from Judith's photograph, along with a cricket.

We wished we were more familiar with the identification of the reeds and sedges and kept a good lookout for leeches while wading through the more swampy parts.

When the Professor met up with us he offered to take those interested to the other side of the lake, then meet us again for the return to the car park area. All but one took up this offer and after four crossings we were a rather straggly group when we continued along the western bank. Walking on this side was quite different, as most of us pushed inland a short distance and followed a bush track back. This let us see

more variety of plants, and also a surprising number of Enamelled Spiders showing great variation in colouring, as they can be white, yellow, green, shades of, and also differing in patterns. At least, those of us in the lead saw them, we carefully put the webs to one side so to pass without wearing them. It is amazing how a spider chooses to put its web across any bush track and at face height! The other common spider in that area was the Leaf Curl Spider.

Returning to the car park we found it was lunch time. A tiger snake had been seen by the rocks at the jetty, but refused to come out again. By then it was quite hot and the air was fairly buzzing with Odonata. The dragonflies rarely sit still, but the damselflies are far more obliging for the camera. There was a good variety of species and red mayflies were also abundant. A praying mantid having just moulted and still with soft white wing covers provided interest, and the flower head of a *Juncus* plant placed in a container revealed not only the long jawed spider perched upon it, but soon a green and brown crab spider emerged along with many tiny baby spiders. Tasmanian tree frogs were actually taking refuge amongst the leaves in a blackwood tree. It was quite a challenge to creep amongst the reeds without disturbance and it will be interesting to see who was the stealthier with cameras at the end of the year.

Professor Forteath showed an album of many of his “catches” at the Lake, and, as the day was now so hot (with no shade) we prepared to make tracks early. Tom and Tina kindly offered a cuppa back at their place at Westwood. This was accepted eagerly and the afternoon was whiled away on their shady verandah.

We thank Professor Forteath for taking the time to show us a very interesting world at Four Springs. Prue Wright

**Birds** ~ *Acanthiza pusilla*, brown thornbill; *Anas castanea*, chestnut teal; *Anas superciliosa*, pacific black duck; *Aquila audax*, wedge-tailed eagle; *Biziura lobata*, musk duck; *Calyptorhynchus funereus*, yellow-tailed black cockatoo; *Cygnus atratus*, black swan; *Fulica atra*, Eurasian coot; *Gallinula mortierii*, native hen; *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, white-bellied sea-eagle; *Hirundo neoxena*, welcome swallow; *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*, little black cormorant; *Porphyrio porphyria*, purple swamp hen; *Rhipidura albiscapa*, grey fantail; *Strepera fuliginosa*, black currawong

**Invertebrates** ~ *Conocephalus semivittatus*, meadow katydid; *Geitoneura klugii*, Klug’s xenica; *Netelia* sp., orange caterpillar parasite; *Phonognatha graeffei*, leaf curling spider; *Pieris rapae* – cabbage white butterfly (introduced); *Plebs bradleyi*, enamelled-back spider; **Damselflies** - *Austroagrion watsonia*, eastern billabong fly, *Austrolestes annulosus*, blue ringtail, *Ischnura heterosticta tasmanica*, common bluetail, *Xanthogrion erythronerum*, red and blue damselfly; **Dragonflies** ~ *Aeshna brevistyla*, blue spotted hawker, *Austrogomphus guerini*, yellow-striped hunter, *Hemicodulia tau*, emerald tau, *Orthetrum caledonicum*, blue skimmer; and **Mayfly**, order Ephemeroptera; Crab spider, family Thomisidae; Long jawed spider, family Tetragnathidae; Praying mantid, family Mantidae.

**Reptiles** ~ *Austrelaps superbus*, copperhead snake; *Notechis scutatus*, tiger

snake; Skink; *Littoria ewingii*, Tasmanian tree frog

**Worm** ~ *Philaemon pungens*, leech

**Grasses** ~ *Carex longebrachiata*, drooping sedge; *Eleocharis acuta*, common spike rush; *Eleocharis sphacelata*, tall spike rush (large); *Gahnia grandis*, cutting grass; *Juncus* sp., rush; *Juncus vaginatus*, clustered rush; *Lepidosperma* sp., swordspike; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Poa* sp., tussockgrass

**Plants** ~ *Acacia melanoxylon*, blackwood; *Acacia verticillata*, prickly moses; *Astroloma humifusum*, native cranberry; *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Bossiaea cordigera*, wiry bossia; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Centaurium erythraea*, common centauray (introduced); *Coprosma quadrifida*, native currant; *Epacris impressa*, common heath; *Eucalyptus globulus*, Tasmanian blue gum; *Eucalyptus viminalis*, white gum; *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, common native-cherry; *Hibbertia procumbens*, spreading guineaflower; *Leptospermum* sp., teatree with small leaf; *Lomatia tinctoria*, guitarplant; *Mazus pumilio*, swamp mazus; *Melaleuca* sp., paperbark; *Melaleuca ericifolia*, coast paperbark; *Melicytus dentatus*, spiky violetbush; *Pomaderris apetala*, dogwood; *Rubus parvifolius*, native raspberry; *Spiranthes australis*, pink spiral orchid

**Ferns** ~ *Blechnum nudum*, fishbone water fern; *Dicksonia Antarctica*, soft tree-fern; *Pteridium esculentum*, austral bracken; *Polystichum proliferum*, mother shield fern

## **SKEMPS DAY ~ Insects ~ Saturday 28 February**

10 members arrived at Skemps to either hunt for insects or to undertake a few odd jobs. The weather was overcast with a forecast of an 80% chance of rain, which John said would arrive around 11 am. The woodheater had been transported to Skemps this morning following a short stay at Peter W's where he had refurbished it. Once the paint dries and has cured, it will be put back insitu so that members and visitors can keep warm during the colder months.

Insect hunters left the Centre heading across to the Zig Zag track in sunshine, although it was the only patch of sun that we saw all day, as the clouds soon rolled in. On the path to the Top Pond we found a small cricket (later identified as a grassland pygmy cricket) which we caught in a small container. There was a large patch of fungus, a *Lichenomphalia* species growing in a damp area just below the entrance to the forest at the Zig Zag track, it was very small about 1 cm across.

In many cases we saw insects that were either too quick, too large or too bitey to catch, but collected about a dozen specimens to look closer at under the microscope and photograph. Above the first section of Zig Zag track we came out at a large fallen tree which has some magnificent large brackets. Making our way around the tree to some fresher smaller brackets a member with keen eyes noticed wasps flying into a nest in the ground and within another 200 metres a second nest was located.

We were pleased to see the mountain pepper looking very good and will pick

some next time. On the boardwalk a carnivore scat was seen and we wondered whether it was a Tasmanian devil or a quoll who had left its calling card.

Leaving the track we came out into the paddock where the *Epacris gunnii* was growing nicely and walked back to the Centre with a little drizzle in the air. The gas BBQ was fired up and members sat inside to eat their lunch as the temperature had dropped and the rain appeared to be settling in.

Following lunch we looked over our photos and put some of the collected specimens under the microscope to get a better look, and also had to chase and recapture a moth that got away before we had finished identifying it.

Around 4pm we had put names to most of our captives so they were set free and we tidied up and made tracks for home. Karen Manning

**Animal** ~ *Macropus rufogriseus*, Bennett's wallaby; *Thylogale billardierii*, Tasmanian pademelon; *Tachyglossus aculeatus*, short-beaked echidna

**Bird** ~ *Acanthiza pusilla*, brown thornbill; *Colluricincla harmonica*, grey shrike thrush; *Cracticus torquatus*, grey butcherbird; *Petroica multicolour*, scarlet robin; *Rhipidura albiscapa*, grey fantail; *Strepera fuliginosa*, black currawong; *Zosterops lateralis*, silvereyes

**Fungi** ~ *Amauroderma rude*, polypore; *Hypocrea sulphurea*, encrusting fungus; *Lichenomphalia umbellifera*; *Lycoperdon pyriforme*, puffball; *Trametes versicolour*, rainbow fungus; and yet to be identified brown cap with white gills and fibrous stipe; and a tall white fungi with wide spaced gills and partial sticky veil

**Insect** ~ *Anonychomyrma prociua*, black ant; *Bobilla* sp., grassland pygmy cricket; *Geitoneura klugii*, Klug's xenica; *Hednota* sp., grass moth; *Myrmecia esuriens*, Tasmanian inchman; *Myrmecia* sp, jack jumper; *Ommatoiulus moreleti*, Portugese millipede (introduced); *Philaemon pungens*, leech; *Teleogryllus commodus*, black field cricket; *Vespula germanica*, European wasp (introduced); Casemoth, family Psychidae; Crane fly, family Tipulidae; Leaf beetle, family Chrysomelidae; Moth, family Geometridae;

**Arachnids** ~ *Cercophonius squama*, scorpion; two unidentified spiders

**GENERAL MEETING ~ GUEST SPEAKER ~ Emma Williams ~ Steps to Saltmarsh Conservation in Tasmania**

Tom Treløgen introduced Emma who was from NRM North. Emma stated her talk would be on the subtropical and temperate saltmarsh communities which were listed in 2013 as vulnerable under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBCA). She pointed out that it took 3 years to get an area listed and in the meantime these communities were still under further threat from development.

Not much is known about Tasmanian saltmarshes and if you go to these areas

they could look like mudflats while Emma described them as beautiful saltmarshes. Communities must be on the coast and are mostly found in bays and estuaries. While saltmarsh plants are seen on cliff faces supported by salt spray, these do not count for this definition as there must be some tidal connection, even if it is only once every ten years that the lagoon mouth opens. These places can be very patchy, with lots of mud and open spaces, and this makes it difficult to explain to landowners and the general public that it is still important. These saltmarsh communities often grade into other vegetation types such as *Melaleuca* and *Casuarina*.

Slides showed some of the typical plants of this community and Emma started with the *Sarcocornia* which stands out when it goes the beautiful red colour and is also edible. The *Tecticornia* shrub is another indicative and important plant providing structure to the soil not provided by smaller plants. Another slide showed what Emma described as the exquisite detail of the small herbs of the community including *Cotula vulgaris* dwarfed by the tip of her finger which was in the photo.

Emma was heartened by the number of people who protect these communities on private property and are involved in other conservation work such as tree planting, often people who do not identify as greenies.

Backed by images she talked about the monocots and stated that while *Phragmites* does not represent a saltmarsh these plants can occur on the edges where the water starts to freshen. *Juncus kraussii* is a common plant in the salt marshes.

We next heard of the threats to saltmarshes which have declined by an estimated 34% from the pre European extent. Threats include clearing, fragmentation and infilling of marshes and altered hydrology by tidal restriction and draining as well as land use which prevents retreat. Climate change, sea level rise, inappropriate use of vehicle, grazing and trampling by stock, acid sulphate soils, pesticides, runnelling, inappropriate fire regimes, pollution, litter and eutrophication are threats as well. As little as one pass by a vehicle can compact the soil enough to harm future growth and a picture featured a pile of branches in a saltmarsh which while not being near heavy vegetation if burnt would damage the marsh plants and Emma hoped it would not be burnt.

Invasive species are a threat and include *Juncus acutus* (spiky rush), *Spartina anglica* (rice grass), *Carcinus maenas* (green crab), *Gambusia holbrooki* (mosquito fish). Although the rice grass appears to have taken over on the banks of the Tamar there are still areas of native species higher on the banks which are being preserved.

There is evidence that with sea level rise the saltmarsh plants can retreat into paddocks although if a road or hard structure is behind the high tide line the community will not survive. A series of pictures showed the negative affects previously described with one notable shot showing a healthy community on one side of a stock fence while the foreground was bare and covered with animal tracks. Emma pointed out that even the natives such as the forester kangaroo can do damage to the communities.

Emma posed the question of why saltmarshes are important and started by telling us that it is an important stage between the land and the sea for nutrient cycling, is an important nursery and feeding area for many species including migratory shorebirds and is surprising biodiverse. She also told us that it is better than a forest at carbon sequestration, locking away the carbon in the soil for thousands of years where a tree

only holds the carbon for the life of the tree. Saltmarshes also form a buffer between the sea and the land being flood 'sponges' and also to absorb wave energy.

*Limoniun australe* has been found at Swan Point which is listed as vulnerable in Tasmania. The area is being driven over and it is difficult to put bollards in due to the risk to aboriginal heritage of the area.

After a seven minutes of questions and answers Emma offered members copies of the book, *A Guide to the Plants of Tasmanian Saltmarsh Wetlands*, which she had contributed to.

Noel Manning

## **MEMBER TALK ~ March 2015 ~ Judith Handler**

Judith asked the question what fish was the closest relative to humans and then went on to explain that it was the lung fish and illustrated this with a slide show and a careful explanation that the immuno-globulin (antibody)-M is most similar to terrestrial animals in the lungfish.

Noel thanked Judith for her interesting talk and members showed their appreciation.

## **FIELD TRIP ~ Sunday 8 March ~ Saltmarsh Wetlands on the Tamar River**

Following the talk on saltmarsh wetland plants by Emma Williams at the previous general meeting, members met at Yorktown to visit the first of two sites recommended to see examples of these types of plants.

The West Arm tidal wetland on the Tamar River has Masseys Creek and York Town Rivulet running into it. Entering the area near the rivulet we saw the rare yellow sea-lavender and small amounts of beaded glasswort amongst the grasses. Walking across Masseys Creek bed, angry crabs reared their pincers at us not happy with us invading their territory.

Further around the coastline, we came across a large area of the beaded glasswort which had trailing saltstar growing amongst it, which was a very pretty sight. An outcrop of higher land had prickly moses, black sheoak, dollybush, coast paperbark and dogwood growing on it, with grasses, native cranberry, creeping bossia, mosses and lichen. It appeared to be home to rabbits and there was a pebbled shoreline facing the river. We noted black swans, silver gulls, masked lapwings and great egrets in the water and on the mudflats.

We lunched at the Yorktown Historic Site picnic area and then walked through an area of regenerated land along the pathway to the actual historic site where we made a quick visit. We tried to catch one of the many yellow winged locust which were hiding in the grass. Prue talked to us about the area that is looked after by the Friends of Yorktown where they are eradicating the gorse and other weeds, and planting endemic species.

Returning to our cars we headed to the spit at Swan Point, where we saw over 100 pied oystercatchers along the right hand side of the spit, sheltering out of the wind. Walking around the river edge, we again found the yellow sea-lavender and beaded glasswort. We also saw sea rush, creeping sea-celery, silver tussockgrass and shiny swampmat.

With the rain coming up the river we headed for our cars and reconvened at the Tamar River Café for coffee and cake. Our discussion focused around what we had seen and all agreed that it had been a great day.

Karen Manning

### **West Arm coastal saltmarsh**

**Plants** ~ *Acacia verticillata*, prickly mooses; *Acrotriche serrulata*, ants delight; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, black sheoak; *Astroloma humifusum*, native cranberry; *Bossiaea prostrata*, creeping bossia; *Cassinia aculeata*, dollybush; *Cassytha* sp., dodder; *Cladina* sp., reindeer lichen; *Epacris impressa*, common heath; *Exocarpus cupressiformis*, common native-cherry; *Hemichroa pentandra*, trailing saltstar; *Leptecophylla juniperina*, common pinkberry; *Leptospermum* sp., teatree; *Limonium australe*, yellow sea-lavender; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Melaleuca ericifolia*, coast paperbark; *Poa labillardierei*, silver tussockgrass; *Pomaderris elliptica* sp., yellow dogwood; *Sarcocornia quinqueflora*, beaded glasswort; *Stylidium graminifolium*, narrowleaf triggerplant; *Themeda triandra*, kangaroo grass; *Xanthorrhoea bracteata*, shiny grasstree.

**Birds** ~ *Ardea alba*, great egret; *Cygnus atratus*, black swan; *Larus novaehollandiae*, silver gull; *Malurus cyaneus*, superb fairy-wren; *Vanellus miles*, masked lapwing

**Miscellaneous** ~ Crabs, family Grapsidae; Dragonflies, family Odonata; *Phonognatha graeffei*, leaf-curling spider

### **Yorktown Historic site**

**Plants** ~ *Acacia melanoxylon*, blackwood; *Acacia terminalis*, sunshine wattle; *Apodasmia brownii*, coarse twinerush; *Baloskion* sp., cordrush; *Epacris lanuginosa*, swamp heath; *Eucalyptus amygdalina*, peppermint; *Eucalyptus viminalis*, white gum; *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, common native-cherry; *Gahnia grandis*, cutting grass; *Leptocarpus tenax*, slender twinerush; *Leptospermum scoparium*, common teatree; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Patersonia fragilis*, short purpleflag; *Pomaderris elliptica* sp, yellow dogwood

**Insects** ~ *Gastrimargus musicus*, yellow winged locust; *Geitoneura klugii*, Klug's xenica; *Hednota relatalis*, grass moth; *Tetrix* sp., pygmy grasshopper brown

**Fungi** ~ Orange fungi

### **Swan Point spit**

**Plants** ~ *Apium prostratum*, creeping sea-celery; *Juncus kraussii*, sea rush; *Limonium australe*, yellow sea-lavender; *Poa labillardierei*, silver tussockgrass; *Sarcocornia quinqueflora*, beaded glasswort; *Selliera radicans*, shiny swampmat; *Spartina anglica*, common cordgrass (rice grass - introduced); *Spergularia tasmanica*, greater sea spurrey; *Suaeda australis*, austral seablite

**Birds** ~ *Haematopus longirostris*, pied oystercatcher

**Jellyfish** ~ *Aurelia aurita*, moon jelly

## **FIELD TRIP ~ Sunday 15 March ~ East Beach Rockpool life**

A small group of members and a visitor met at the East Beach carpark to explore the rockpools and the flora on the sand dunes along the beach. With lowtide not until 1pm, we walked along the beach to where Cimitier Creek's waters once flowed out at the beach. Here we decided to explore behind the sandhills to see what plant life was there. The water in the creek was stagnant and a bit on the nose.

We were pleasantly surprised to see more examples of saltmarsh wetland plants, both the native and roundleaf pigface species, coastal saltbush, sea-celery, beaded glasswort, although unfortunately there was also large areas of the introduced sea spurge. We walked along the creek a distance before we were forced up into the sandhill and back over to the beach.

There were large black rocky areas on the beach as well as the nice sandy patches, we wondered how and why all the black rocks were there? At the next headland we headed up a sandy track which followed the beach through grasses and shrubs. Striped grasshoppers were hopping about everywhere and were good enough to sit still long enough for us to get some good photos and leaf curling spiders were seen in their large webs sprawled across the shrubs.

The variety of sponges and seaweeds seen in the high tide area was interesting and we also found pieces of rock that could have been fossilised wood. We walked as far as Three Mile Reef and then headed back to the picnic area for a late lunch.

Back on the beach to explore the rockpools the low tide allowed us to get down further into the rocks than we had been able to in the past. We were disappointed to find less variety of shells, sea stars and crabs than in previous years.

Around 4pm we left the headland with the tide coming in, having enjoyed another day at the beach.

Karen Manning

Along creek side and sand dunes:

**Plants** ~ *Acacia longifolia* subsp. *sophorae*, coast wattle or boobialla; *Acaena novae-zelandiae*, common buzzy; *Apium prostratum*, slender sea-celery; *Atriplex prostrata*, creeping orache (introduced); *Banksia marginata*, silver banksia; *Cakile edentula*, American sea rocket (introduced); *Carpobrotus rossii*, native pigface; *Cassinia aculeata*, dollybush; *Dianella revoluta*, spreading flaxlily; *Dichondra repens*, kidneyweed; *Disphyma crassifolium*, roundleaf pigface; *Euphorbia paralias*, sea spurge (introduced); *Ficinia nodosa*, knobby clubsedge; *Juncus* sp, rush; *Lepidosperma gladiatum*, coast swordsedg; *Limonium australe*, yellow sea-lavender; *Lobelia anceps*, angled lobelia; *Pelargonium australe*, southern storksbill; *Polypogon monspeliensis*, annual beardgrass (introduced); *Rhagodia candolleana*, coastal saltbush; *Sarcocornia quinqueflora*, bearded glasswort; *Senecio elegans*, purple groundsel (introduced); *Spinifex sericeus*, beach spinifex; *Tetragonia implexicoma*, bower spinach

**Miscellaneous** ~ *Macrotona australis*, common macrotona grasshopper; *Phonognatha graeffei*, leaf curling spider

**Birds** ~ *Charadrius ruficapillus*, red-capped plover; *Larus novaehollandiae*, silver gull; *Larus pacificus*, pacific gull; *Thinornis rubricollis*, hooded plover

And in the rock pools :

**Algae/Coral/Lichen** ~ *Codium* sp., codium; *Coralina officinalis*, tufted coralline; *Hormosira banksii*, neptune's necklace; *Celleporaria cristata*, lace coral; *Lichen confinis*, black tufted lichen

**Anemones** ~ *Actinia tenebrosa*, waratah anemone

**Barnacles** ~ *Chamaesipho tasmanica*, honeycomb barnacle; *Eliminius modestus*, Darwin's barnacle; *Tetraclitella purpurascens*, purple barnacle

**Chitons** ~ *Ischnochiton australis*, southern chiton; *Sypharochiton pelliserpentis*, snakeskin chiton

**Fish** ~ *Palaemon* sp, shrimp

**Limpets** ~ *Cellana solida*, orange-edged limpet; *Clypidina rugosa*, rugose slit limpet

**Marine worms** ~ Tiny spiral calcareous tubes, family Spirorbidae; *Eunice laticeps*, iridescent biting worm; *Galeolaria caespitosa*, calcareous tubes polychaete worms

**Seastars and allies** ~ *Astrostele scaber*, seven armed seastar - orange tube feet; *Parvulastra exigua*, 5 armed cushion star; Tiny brittle star – Order Ophiurida, Family either Amphipruridae or Ophiacanthidae

**Shells** ~ *Austrocochlea concamerata*, wavy top-shell; *Austrocochlea constricta*, ribbed top-shell; *Limnoperna pulex*, flea mussel; *Nerite atramentosa*, western black nerite; *Pleuroploca australasia*, tulip shell egg mass; *Thalotia conica*, conical kelp shell

**Sponges** ~ *Aplysilla rosea*, rose rock sponge; *Haliclona* sp., purple rock sponge; Rock pool sponges - orange and brown

## **SKEMPS DAY ~ Saturday 21 March**

It was lovely warm day when we arrived at Myrtle Bank. Following the usual cuppa and chat we gathered some tools and headed to the Federation Corridor where we proceeded to remove a large section of fencing wire to relocate to the Top Pond to protect a few struggling *Leptospermum* plants growing there. Although they are too large for their cage surrounds, when the cage is removed the wallabies have continually damaged them to the point where cages have been reinstalled. Today our plan was to remove the cages, trim the plants and fence them in small groups in the hope that they will have a chance to strengthen and grow undisturbed by the animals.

With 9 members and a visitor helping, the fence wire was removed after undoing numerous small wire catches in each section. It had been very well built and it was assumed that the amateur builders, though instructed by experienced fence builders, had added much more wire than needed with many extra turns. The recovered wire was then rolled up and secured for later reuse. The grass clods growing through the fence were placed in the bare patch along the fence line and hopefully it will grow back in time.

The area tidied and the wheelbarrow filled with all the tools, we headed over to the Top Pond where we left our gear and headed back to the Centre for a leisurely lunch before returning to finish our job.

Two areas needed to be fenced and we started on the larger of these hammering in the star pickets before placing the chicken wire and securing it. Before the last section was secured the trees were trimmed and those inside allowed out before the job was finished. In the second smaller area that was fenced the two plants had been badly damaged by the wildlife and we look forward to them recovering and watching them grow.

Picking up our tools, left over pickets and wire as well as the rubbish, the fantastic band of workers headed back to the Centre for a well deserved hot drink before heading home.

Karen Manning

### **SOCIAL EVENING ~ Monday 23 March ~ Steve's Grill**

Eighteen members met at Steve's new venue at the Centennial Hotel for the annual social evening. The menu had something for everyone, including the five junior members who attended.

The table service from the staff was excellent, the food was great with good sized meals and this did not include the salad bar from which we could also make choices. The dessert menu was popular as most people indulged in one of the sweets on offer. We all had a great time and were in no hurry to leave, chatting late into the evening.

Karen Manning

### **AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY MEETINGS**

LFNC members are welcome to attend APS meetings held on a Tuesday at Max Fry Hall, Gorge Road Trevallyn at 7.30 pm. The next meetings will be on:

April 21 ~ Tanya Bailey ~ Rest plantings in Midlands

May 19 ~ Matt Larcombe ~ Eucalypt evolution

**Plant Sale:-** The APS will hold their autumn native plant sale at the Max Fry Hall on Saturday 18 April from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. The plants, propagated by members and grown at the APS nursery, are available at very reasonable prices.

## **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. Morning tea is normally provided by the bus company on bus outings.
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)