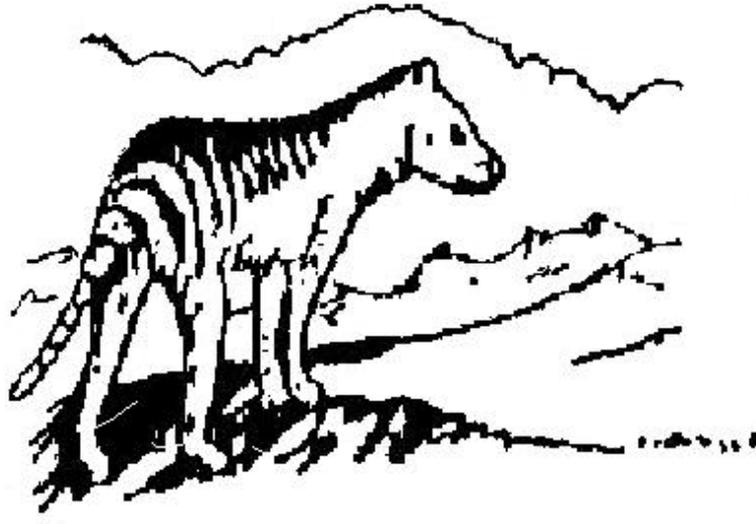


THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

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



Volume XLII No 2

December 2008/January 2009

- Patron** : Mr Chris Tassell, AM
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- Hon. Secretary** : Mr J Elliott, 64 Penquite Rd Newstead, 6344 9303
- Hon. Treasurer** : Ms K Manning, 46 Robin St Newstead, 6344 2277
- N'letter Co-ordinator** : Ms K. Manning

Meetings held monthly Feb-Dec on 1st Tuesday of month at Scotch-Oakburn College, Penquite Rd Newstead

Subscriptions: Year 2008-2009 \$25 Single, \$30 Family, \$2.50 Junior, \$35 Associate.

Due and payable on or before 4 Nov 2008

PROGRAM 2009

FEBRUARY

- Tuesday 3** **General Meeting - Guest Speaker Eric Woehler from Birds Tasmania on 'Shorebirds of Northern Tasmania'**
- Saturday 7** **Field Trip - George Town Foreshore Reserve**
- Monday 16** **Club Dinner - Steve's Grill at Riverside (more details this newsletter) - RSVP by 6 February**
- Sunday 22** **Skemp Day**

MARCH

- Tuesday 3** **General Meeting - Guest Speaker Lorraine De Weys 'Caring for Orphaned Wild Animals'**
- Sunday 8** **Field Trip - with Lorraine De Weys, location to be advised**
- Saturday 21** **Skemp Day**

APRIL

- Friday 3 -
Sunday 5** **Federation Weekend - Cradle Mountain hosted by Burnie Field Naturalists Club**
- Sunday 5** **Visit Cradle Mountain to look at the glaciology of the area with Michael Thrush**
- Tuesday 7** **General Meeting - Guest Speaker Brendan McMahon 'Global Warming'**
- Sunday 19** **Skemp Day - Water Monitoring and Judging of Photographic Competition**

To see the full January to June 2009 program visit

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

COMMITTEE/GENERAL MEETING DECEMBER 2008

Skemp Report - John Simmons reported that the 2 extra tanks had been delivered. Green Corps has dug the platform for the tank stand and almost completed the new boardwalks on the North Walk loop. John Elliott contacted CSIRO Entomology regarding involvement in the blackberry rust release trial. Cultures have been received and released at Skemps.

Sightings - Elizabeth Montgomery said that Waratahs were flowering at Quamby and that Magpies were at Glenara. John Elliott reported seeing a Crested Pigeon (a species that should not occur in Tasmania) at Chudleigh. Pardalotes were nesting behind a fascia board on Jean Horder's house. Tom Treløgen reported an orchid which Jeff Campbell tentatively identified as *Gastrodia procera*.

Library Report - The yearly publication from the Tas Field Naturalists *The Tasmanian Naturalist* has been received and has a review written by Mark Wapstra of the Club's publication *A Guide to Flowers and Plants of Tasmania*. Sarah Lloyd has sent a CD containing images from the Weymouth Federation weekend. Approval given for the purchase of *The Orchids of Tasmania*.

General - Approval has been given for a gift to be purchased for the proprietors of the Nunamara Store to acknowledge their assistance with key collection by visitors to the Field Centre.

MEMBERS NIGHT - 2 December

Four members took us armchair (well not quite in the comfort of an armchair) travelling with their presentations.

Jeff Campbell showed photographs taken during his and Glenys' recent travels in Tasmania, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

John Simmons' presentation was from his and Marion's trip to Victoria in October, where they attended an Eremophila Conference in Horsham. The program had included visits to 3 gardens that were planted with eremophila of which John had taken photographs so members could see the variety of the plant. John and Marion also hired a houseboat on the Murray River with Hobart members Noel and Pat Kerrison. We were shown many pictures from this area and heard many stories from their interesting trip.

Noel Manning's photographs included those taken during the Club's recent trip to Winifred Curtis Reserve at Scamander and others in the Liawenee area at the Federation get-together earlier in the year. He also had

a video of a injured seal at Scamander Beach .

John Elliott's photographs were of animals and plants from Spain and other parts of Europe.

Members thanked Jeff, John S, Noel and John E for their interesting presentations. Christmas supper followed.

CHRISTMAS AT SKEMPS - 8 December

The day was a little overcast but about 30 people arrived to take part in the days activities. First order of the day was to unload the trailer which was bogged within the Field Centre grounds due to the weight of the wet sand. The sand was to be relocated to the new tank stand site on the hill behind the Centre and with the many buckets and volunteers available this was done quickly. This was followed by members decorating the Christmas tree and hanging the balloons.

Many chose to stretch their legs and take a walk, prior to the BBQ being lit and having lunch. With the threat of a shower following lunch, members tended to sit and catch up with each other, prior to 'Santa' arriving. He was assisted by the Ralph's grandson Bailey ensuring that no-one missed receiving a gift from under the tree. Following an enjoyable afternoon tea provided by members, many left in hope of missing the expected rain.

Visitors Jenny and Brian were guided through the Watergate and Zig-Zag walking tracks by Noel, arriving back at the Centre just as the rain commenced.

VALE - MOLLIE TOMLIN

Sincere sympathy to Ray and Ruth Tomlin on the passing of Ray's mother Mollie.

Mollie, although not a member, visited the property on numerous occasions and was the artist who painted the watercolour of Skemp Barn located in the small reading room in the John Skemp Field Centre.

SKEMP DAY - 24 January

A warm sunny day followed the much needed early morning rain. 12 members arrived for what was expected to be a quiet day considering it was the long weekend. Following the morning cuppa and a chat, people drifted off to enjoy a walk before lunch.

2 interstate travellers who were staying at Myrtle Park had walked up Targa Hill Road and called in to visit. They had seen a dead animal on the

road during their walk and were interested to discover what it was. After describing it, the *Field Guide to Tasmanian Mammals* was consulted and our visitors confirmed that the deceased animal had been a Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus*). They declined to stay for lunch, but before heading back to the Park, took a walk to the old homestead site to have a look around.

Lunch followed the usual ritual around the BBQ. More walks and some odd jobs were completed before we all headed home following a quiet but enjoyable day.

RUTH UPSON UPDATE

Ruth has been moved from the LGH to a shared room at Fred French Nursing Home in Amy Road Newstead. Members who have visited Ruth recently reported she was looking well.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL SUBSCRIPTION ARE NOW
DUE FOR RENEWAL. SINGLE \$25.00 AND FAMILY \$30.00**

CLUB DINNER - Monday 16 February

Our Club dinner will be at Steve's Grill on Monday 16 February , 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm. Steve's Grill certainly has a good grill menu but there is also a comprehensive general menu which caters for all tastes. Entrees from \$5.50 - \$16.00 include soup, chicken and seafood dishes. Mains from \$10.00 - \$26.50 include sausages, kebabs, pasta dishes, chicken, seafood and salads. Steve's steaks range from \$20.00 - \$42.00 depending on weight and a choice of 5 sauces is offered. Desserts are \$8.90 if you have any room left.

To get to Steve's go down the West Tamar Road past the Trevallyn Power Station and turn right past the apartment blocks. Keep in the right hand lane for about 100 metres then turn right in to the area in front of the apartments. There are a few parking places on your left but if these are occupied keep going under the archway and there is parking at the end of the building. If these are full keep going around the back of the building where there is plenty of parking space. Dress is optional.

Members not at the February General Meeting who wish to attend the dinner must RSVP to John or Marion Simmons on 6330 1370 or e-mail jayemes@bigpond.com before 6 February.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Early this year your Club will conduct a photographic competition for members, with Tasmanian natural history as the subject. Judging will be by members and take place at the John Skemp Field Centre on April 19. More information next meeting regarding details including print specifications.

PLATYPUS REPORTS

Observations of healthy or sick wild platypuses and exactly where and when they are seen is being sought by the Department of Primary Industries & Water, as part of the 'Platypus Partnership Program' being funded by NRM through the Australian Government. This information will be used to help map the spread in Tasmania of the debilitating ulcerating disease, known as mucormycosis. The disease is not known to affect platypuses on the mainland. It is caused by the fungus *Mucor amphibiorum*, which can infect and kill frogs. It is thought that the fungus may have been accidentally introduced into Tasmania via infected frogs probably hiding in imported fruit or illegally imported as pets.

Platypuses with mucormycosis have only been found in Tasmania and sighted here from the mid 1990's. Your observations of platypuses is sought by the Department and can help in building a map of distribution, transmissions and impacts of the disease.

Contact details: Department of Primary Industries & Water
134 Murray Street, Hobart 7000
Phone (03) 6233 6556

e-mail: Platypusenquiries@dpiw.tas.gov.au

Launceston Field Naturalists Club via John Simmons has notified DPIW of the platypus seen in the ponds on the Skemp property.

SUPPER VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are required for the supper roster for the General Meetings this year. Please contact Lynne Mockridge on 6344 5611 to volunteer.

FEDERATION WEEKEND

The next weekend get-together of field naturalists will be held at Cradle Mountain, hosted by Burnie Field Naturalists Club. Those thinking of attending should reserve Friday 3 to Sunday 5 April in their diary. Further information on the weekend will be distributed when available.

AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY MEETINGS

LFNC members are welcome to attend APS meetings held on the third Tuesday in the month at Max Fry Hall, Gorge Road Trevallyn at 7.30 pm. Their first meeting for 2009 will be on February 17 with Sharon Percy's presentation on Hamilton Island.

Visit <http://www.apstasnorth.org/program-shell.htm> for further program details

AZURE KINGFISHER - SIGHTINGS WANTED by Mark Wapstra

"I am currently compiling information on the azure kingfisher in Tasmania to produce a profile of the species for the Threatened Species Section (Department of Primary Industries & Water). There is virtually no published information on the species in Tasmania beyond anecdotal sightings in newsletters and annual publications. Formal database information is also scant and imprecise. I'm keen to hear from anyone who has information on the azure kingfisher. I'm after location information (ideally a precise grid reference or latitude/longitude but even a river name or road crossing is very useful), dates seen (again, ideally as precise as possible but even a year gives a good picture of historical shifts in distribution) and abundance/behaviour (i.e. how many, and what were they doing, especially if they were breeding). I'm also happy to be put in contact with others who might have information.

Please contact Mark Wapstra on (03) 62 283 220 (after hours and business hours) or 0407 008 685 (mobile) or mark@ecotas.com.au "

From Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Bulletin No 332

TAMAR NRM - RAGWORT RAIDS

The Annual Ragwort Raid in the West Tamar area will be held on 7 February from 9.00am - 12.00am., with a BBQ to follow. Meet at Winkleigh Hall. All volunteers to contact the co-ordinator Jayne Shapter on 6394 4376 for information and registrations.

Additional Information

Club Outings:

1. All outings depart from Windmill Hill Hall Car Park at 9 am unless otherwise specified.
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.

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 : lfnc@bigpond.com