

# 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 No. 4**

**April/May 2013**

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| <b>Committee</b>             | <b>:</b> | <b>E Montgomery, T McGlynn, P Ralph, P Warren</b>           |

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

## PROGRAM

### JUNE

- Tuesday 4            General Meeting - Guest Speaker: Sabatino Cesile - *Quarantine*
- Saturday 15        Field Trip: Tamar Island - *Local birds and introduced gambusia*  
and Queechy Park - *Birds*
- Sunday 23         Skemp Day - Fungi & Ferns

### JULY

- Tuesday 2         General Meeting - Guest Speaker: Paul Flood - *Cave Dwellers*
- Sunday 7          Field Trip: ? Mole Creek Caves (to be confirmed)
- Saturday 27        Skemp Day - National Tree Day (more information this  
newsletter) and Fungi and Ferns

### AUGUST

- Tuesday 6         General Meeting - Guest Speaker: Jeff Wright - *Kelp and*  
*Climate Change*
- Sunday 11         Field Trip: to be advised
- Sunday 25         Skemp Day

### SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday 3         General Meeting - Guest Speaker: Phillipa Alexander - *Bird*  
*Photography*
- Sunday 8          Field Trip: Badger Head to Windred Creek
- Sat 28 - Sun 29    Skemp Weekend - Astronomy

### OCTOBER

- Tuesday 1         Annual General Meeting - venue to be advised
- Fri 11 - Sun 13    Federation Get-together - Camp Banksia hosted by  
Central North Field Naturalists Club (see details this  
newsletter)
- Sunday 27         Skemp Day - *Water Monitoring*

July - December 2013 program will be available shortly at

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

## COMMITTEE/GENERAL MEETING

### Skemp Report

Work is confined to maintenance, grass cutting, weed spraying and the cutting, splitting and storing of fire wood. Grant only attends every second week though his time is invaluable as the driver of the ride on mower and the only expert with a chainsaw.

### Puggle

May - Simon Fearn provided an image of a moth and asked members to identify it. Jill Campbell correctly suggested that it was a wattle goat moth. Simon then talked about the moth saying the larva was much sought after by fisherman for their lures.

### Sightings

**April** - Peter Longman saw four cattle egrets on cattle and another four between the legs, a white goshawk at Dilston and a lone kookaburra doing belly flops into a pond and then flying up and calling as though there was a mate present. He also saw a sea eagle over his garden with many other types of bird attacking it. Robert Montgomery saw a sea eagle at Horse Head Rivulet. Peter Ralph saw galahs ripping plastic from Hydro equipment. Prue Wright saw a white goshawk at Muddy Creek. Paul Edwards lost a gold fish to a white faced heron, one of eight he has lost and at Greens Beach he saw a dead smooth short tailed sting ray with no obvious injuries. Tom Treloggen reported seeing black cockatoos and musk lorikeets in Launceston.

**May** - Simon Fearn had seen an eastern long-necked turtle at Spreyton which is not permitted in Tasmania. Prior to Easter a drain digger had located some eggs which hatched into baby turtles. This has resulted in a male and female turtle being located and removed from a nearby dam. Simon also said there was a flock of swift parrots in the Riverside area. Prue Wright had seen eastern rosella's at Gravelly Beach her first sighting in the area. John Elliott heard a southern boobook owl calling in Newstead following the last General Meeting. John also told members about the two juvenile freshwater crayfish (presumably *Astacopsis franklinii*) found in the water sample taken for water monitoring recently.

**Australian Plant Society (APS)** - Due to the number of Club members also being affiliated with the APS Northern group, it has been agreed that members are welcome to attend each other's field trips, in addition to meetings.

**Skemp Day 27 July** - In recognition of Planet Ark's National Tree Day, the Committee has planned to carry out some much needed maintenance on the trees planted over the last couple of years below the Federation Corridor and along the creek. Bags and surrounds will be removed if no longer needed, weeding done and we will replace some plants that have not survived. Your participation would be appreciated on the day and we will also take a walk to look for fungi and ferns.

## GENERAL MEETING 2 April 2013 - SPEAKER Simon Fearn - *Invasive Species*

Tom Treloggen introduced Simon who was to talk on the Invasive Species Branch, a division of DPIPW. Simon told us that his division mainly dealt with terrestrial vertebrates, specifically foxes, feral cats, wild dogs, feral pigs, rabbits and exotic birds, and terrestrial and aquatic weeds. Also that his division did not deal with marine animals,

invertebrates, pathogens, diseases, native species, exotic fish and import regulation.

There was some information and many comments on introduced deer which are well established in the State. The impact on native flora and fauna is unknown and, as with introduced trout, deer contribute millions of dollars to the Tasmanian economy. Red deer were introduced to the east coast in the 70s for hunting but were shot before they could breed.

Although he assumed we had heard enough about foxes there were questions and he gave some information starting with the fact that although many people feel that the Fox Task Force was a waste of time and money the government could not afford to take the risk. In Victoria the millions of foxes mean that as you drive around you do not see road kill except for foxes, the odd cat and rabbit and a roo when you get further out. Most small mammals have been lost and it is down to foxes. One slide showed a dead lamb with the tail and face up to the eyes chewed off in what Simon called a typical fox kill.

We saw a slide with pictures of many of Tasmania's iconic small animals, the native hen, little penguin, fairy tern, masked lapwing, Tasmanian bettong, spotted tail quoll, new holland mouse and the eastern barred bandicoot. Many are no longer seen on the mainland states, and all would be under threat if foxes gained a foothold here. There was some laughter when someone mentioned *Midsomer Murders* and Simon confirmed that you can often hear foxes calling in the background.

Simon told us that cats were a favourite topic and that his views would not mesh with the thoughts of many people in the room. Feral and stray cats are the responsibility of land owners, including local councils for the urban council reserves, and the Department will help out where it can. The Department is only concerned with feral cats in World Heritage areas and National Parks. Simon stated that the legislation only suggested private owners microchip and desex cats they were selling or giving away and that this needed to be tightened up while breeders and seller were required to desex and microchip the cats they sold. Due to a lack of resources the Department could only advise stake holders on controlling the cats and there would not be any widespread culling. Cats have been here for over 200 years and are widespread throughout Tasmania and would be impossible to eradicate. Even if we had the means there was no guarantee that native animals would not be affected as well. He stated that cats are imbedded in every ecosystem and there has been no study on the impact of cats. There is no evidence that cats have had an impact on a single native species.

Cats are however a big problem on small offshore islands, especially where sea birds roost. Recently cats have been removed from Tasman Island and there has been a sharp rise in the number of sea birds nesting there. It is easy to remove cats from an island because it is a small area with a limited numbers of cats and no more moving in. As monies become available the Department will move to other islands to remove cats. In rural areas the cats may keep the rabbits under control and if you tamper with the cat population you do not know what the flow on effect is going to be. Macquarie Island is another example of clearing of cats from an island although there was a problem in that other pests became a big problem. In future all pests will be dealt with at once so that mice, rats and rabbits are removed as well as the cats.

After a member question Simon gave information on the best way to trap cats starting with winter trapping when their food is scarce. Also, Department traps are left

unopened and without bait for a few weeks till the cats get used to them being there and are then baited and set. Simon advised that any pungent oily meat would be suitable or a rabbit hind leg or any other typical cat food. He also told us of that a cat trapped within two kilometres of houses should be taken to the RSPCA where it will be checked for identification and euthanased if not claimed.

Rainbow lorikeets have been recorded around the Tasmanian coast with the odd bird or pair since the earliest days of settlement. Just recently there has been a very large increase in their numbers in the Ulverstone/Devonport area and Kingston in the south and this has been linked to aviary escapes. The issue is big because of what happened in Western Australia where a few birds got out of aviaries and suddenly they had 25,000 and not only were these stealing nesting sites from native parrots but they were going into vineyards and stripping them. A bird has been seen in the Launceston area which may have hybridised from a rainbow and a musk lorikeet.

Agile wallabies from the tropical coast of northern Australia were kept at the wild-life park at Bicheno in lax security conditions and a population escaped and lives around the golf course, is breeding and numbers around 100 animals. They are slow to spread and breed as the golf course provides excellent winter feed and most joeys may be killed by the winter frosts. Simon provided a description to go with the slide showing how to distinguish them from the similar sized bennett's wallaby. These included a more upright stance, distinctive white blaze around the face and ears and black markings on the face. The agile wallaby is known to produce fertile offspring with the bennett's wallaby.

The superb lyrebirds, which was considered threatened by foxes in Victoria, was introduced into Tasmania in the 1930s or 1940s as an insurance population and was then declared a protected native species. The lyrebird uses its large feet to rake over leaf litter looking for small invertebrates and reptiles as food and will also pull out seedling treasures. If it ever gets into the wet forests of the north east it could be a problem as the area contains lots of flightless endemic ground dwelling stag beetles. Simon considers this to be a sleeper species because of the potential for harm to the Tasmanian environment and would like it to be taken off the protected species list.

Simon spoke of the Indian myna and the differences between it and the native noisy miner as many people easily confuse these. They are a major problem all over the mainland and occasionally a pair will get to Tasmania. We are fortunate to have lots of mad twitchers out there who soon ring up when they see them. He said that this is exactly what we want for the public to be aware of things like this and to ring the Department when they see them.

Simon considers the long necked tortoise to be another sleeper species and admitted that he had three as a child in the late 60s. In 1974 it became illegal to take native species from the wild. It is unknown whether these can breed in Tasmania but it may be possible in the warmer parts of northern Tasmania including the islands.

All sorts of lizards, geckos and frogs are constantly coming into Tasmania. When mainland fruit containers are opened at supermarkets these things often hop out.

Tina asked about dogs as Simon had stated that these were a problem species. Simon told us that dogs are not a major problem as when a pack becomes active farmers are quick to shoot them. Dogs can be a problem when they get older and wiser and are difficult to catch. There are packs in the highlands which are proving difficult to

catch. After they build up they are shot and trapped and this runs in cycles.

Simon claims he does not lose any sleep over rabbits as most of the native animals eat them. Prior to the 1954 introduction of myxomatosis, rabbits were a big problem which is hard to imagine these days and at that time this big population supported a large industry. If you go onto Trove, an online site that digitized old newspapers, you can find articles on the huge rabbit population of the past.

Members had been asking questions throughout the presentation so there were few at the end. One interesting question was whether a Tasmanian pest species was rare or endangered where it came from. Simon stated that he was not aware of any.

Simon stated that bumble bees and European wasps were well established and it would not be possible to eliminate them and they do not have the impact on the environment of honey bees. Honey bees can be a problem as they take nectar which would be used by native animals and take over tree hollows and have threatened parrots in WA. As with trout, honey bees are a major contributor to the economy.

Tasmania's cold climate saves us from many invasive species. Queensland has been inundated with lots of tropical insects coming in, tropical ants and tropical reptiles including the green iguana. Warm places have a major problem with invasive species. As an example the Everglades has Burmese pythons up to 20 feet long.

Tom Treloggen asked Peter Ralph to give the vote of thanks and members showed their appreciation.

Noel Manning

## **FIELD TRIP Sunday 7 April - Jackeys Marsh**

Nine club members and a visitor joined members from the Central North group at Deloraine to drive to a Jackeys Marsh property owned by Richard and Stevie Cooper to look at ferns and fungi. Arriving at the property we can see Mother Cummings Peak to our west and Quamby Bluff in the east. The Coopers' have lived on the 75 acre property for 18 years, which includes mature eucalypt forest, old rainforest and cleared pasture. They have since placed a covenant on the land, which was the first one in the Jackeys Marsh area. Their neighbour has since done the same so there is now quite a large corridor of land under covenant.

Leaving the cleared pasture area around their home we headed to the forest, where we split into two groups. Stevie took those interested in a flat walk to a rainforest area and Richard took others to the steeper dryer area of the property. Stevie talked about their acquisition of the property and what they had done over the years. There is unfortunately exotic elderberry in the forest and they are in the process of eradicating this. They have also been lucky enough to record quolls and devils feeding during the night. To do this they set up a camera in a forest clearing and chained a piece of road kill between the trees so it could not be dragged away out of sight of the camera.

Walking along the track we were surrounded by very tall eucalypts in an area that had been logged in years long gone. We were fascinated by the remains of huge felled and fallen trees covered in mosses and lichens. One fallen tree in particular had its own little garden growing in the base of the trunk; we counted about eight plant species in the trunk garden. There was also a variety of ferns along the way.

On the return trip to our host's home for lunch, a small group decided to walk down the steeper track to see the difference in the forest. We met the other group returning

who told us of all the obstacles on the way. Continuing into the mature eucalypt forest we noted a large quantity of young blackwood trees growing and clematis in tree tops. At the turn in the track we headed back for lunch. There were of course leeches in the bush, most of us had at least one attach to our boots or clothing, but a couple of unlucky walkers were a meal for the leeches.

After lunch we walked around the dam near the house, hoping to catch sight of the birds that Stevie said had been seen there recently. We were out of luck, we saw none of the birds and the frogs we heard during our lunch didn't croak at all. We did however see fantails and scarlet robins in the bushland behind the dam and a black duck flew overhead.

Thanking our hosts and the Central North members for allowing us to accompany them, we returned to Deloraine and stopped for a coffee and chat at the café opposite the Train Park, before heading back to our respective homes after an enjoyable day with great weather.

Karen Manning

The following flora and fauna were seen during this field trip.

### **Plants**

*Acacia melanoxylon*, blackwood; *Billardiera mutabilis* sp., appleberry; *Chiloglottis* sp., bird-orchid leaves; *Clematis aristata*, mountain clematis; *Coprosma quadrifida*, native currant; *Daviesia latifolia*, hop bitterpea; *Dianella tasmanica*, forest Flaxlily; *Dichroandra repens*, kidneyweed; *Diplarrena moraea*, white flag-iris; *Dryophila cyanocarpa*, turquoise berry; *Eucalyptus amygdalina*, black peppermint; *Eucalyptus obliqua*, stringybark; *Eucalyptus viminalis*, white gum; *Juncus* sp., rush; *Leptecophylla* sp., pinkberry; *Lomandra longifolia*, sagg; *Olearia argophylla*, musk daisybush; *Olearia lirata*, forest daisybush; *Pelargonium australe*, southern storksbill; *Pimelea humilis*, dwarf riceflower; *Pittosporum bicolor*, cheesewood; *Stylidium dilatatum*, broadleaf triggerplant; *Tasmannia lanceolata*, mountain pepper; *Zieria arborescens*, stinkwood

### **Ferns**

*Blechnum nudum*, fishbone waterfern; *Dicksonia antarctica*, soft treefern; *Histiopteris incisa*, bat's wing fern; *Polystichum proliferum*, mother shieldfern

### **Lichens**

*Cladonia* sp., lichen; *Usnea* sp., old man's beard

### **Fungi**

*Bisporella citrina*, yellow disk fungi; *Bolete* sp., fleshy-pore fungi; *Mycena* sp., fungi light brown cap; *Russula* sp., white gilled fungi; *Stereum illudens*, leathery shelf fungi; *Tremella fuciformis*, white brain fungi

### **Birds**

*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*, yellow-rumped thornbill; *Acanthiza pusilla*, brown thornbill; *Anas castanea*, chestnut teal (male & female); *Anas superciliosa*, black duck; *Calyptorhynchus funereus*, yellow-tailed black-cockatoo; *Colluricincla harmonica*, grey shrike-thrush; *Malurus cyaneus*, superb fairy-wren; *Pardalotus punctatus*, spotted pardalote; *Pardalotus striatus*, striated pardalote; *Passer domesticus*, sparrow; *Petroica multicolour*, scarlet robin (male & female); *Rhipidura fuliginosa*, grey fantail; *Strepera fuliginosa*, black currawong; *Zosterops lateralis*, silvereye

## Other

*Pseudophryne semimarmorata*, Southern toadlet Dragonfly sp.; Leech; Moth from Cossidae family; Spider

## **FIELD TRIP Friday 26 April - Cradle Mountain**

Eight LFNC members, two APS and two Photographic Society members met at the Inveresk carpark for an early departure to Cradle Mountain where we hoped to see the glorious colours of the *Nothofagus gunnii* which usually turns around ANZAC day.

We arrived at Cradle Mountain Visitors Centre around 10 am in drizzling rain and wind. Waiting for the last car to arrive, someone said “are we mad”, we decided we probably were, but now we were here we would make the most of the day.

Once everyone had arrived and had a coffee, we headed to the carpark at the Rangers Station and Interpretation Centre a few kilometres further along. As we were unable to enter the park due to the volume of traffic on the roadway, we decided to walk into the Pencil Pine Falls and further downstream to the Knyvet Falls. The whole walk was on boardwalks thankfully as there were many small streams running and pools of water forming from run-off from the rocky cliffs beside us. Both waterfalls were spectacular with the large amount of water cascading over them. There were lots of photo opportunities here, the rocks and tree stumps covered in lush mosses and lichens, a strawberry coloured fungi and then there were two gorgeous wombats in their old tree stump home who patiently sat for us.

We lunched at the Ranger Station and then found we could get through the boom gate into the Park. With the weather still no better, we headed to Waldheim carpark where we saw our first fagus trees with their leaves starting to turn. With reports of fagus at Lake Lilla, a group of four drove to Lake Dove to walk to Lake Lilla. Those remaining did the Weindorfers Forest Walk a short stroll through ancient rainforest, seeing pencil pines, king billy pines, deciduous beech, tea-tree, pandani and richea species.

We then headed to the lake to catch up with the other group, the drizzle had become rain and the wind gusty and cold. Two car groups decided to head back to Launceston while the others waited for the Lake Lilla group to return. Although the weather was not on our side, we enjoyed our trip. Karen Manning

An email from Paul Edwards who was with the Lake Lilla group said “reports of *Nothofagus gunnii* on the Lake Lilla / Wombat Pool track were grossly exaggerated - there were none ! Nothing daunted, we pressed on around Dove Lake in the wind and rain past the boatshed and the track to Marion's, nearly to the Ballroom Forest where we finally found the elusive fagus!”

The following flora and fauna were seen during this field trip

## **Flora**

*Anopterus glandulosus*, Tasmanian laurel; *Athrotaxis selaginoides*, king billy pine; *Athrotaxis cupressoides*, pencil pine; *Bauera rubioides*, wiry bauera; *Bellendena montana*, mountain rocket; *Blechnum nudum*, fishbone waterfern; *Boronia citriodora* subsp. *citriodora*, central lemon boronia; *Coprosma nitida*, mountain currant; *Epacris*



sp., heath; *Eucalyptus coccifera*, snow peppermint; *Eucalyptus gunnii*, cider gum; *Eucalyptus subcrenulata*, yellow gum; *Eucryphia lucida*, leatherwood; *Gleichenia alpina*, alpine coralfern; *Grammitis magellanica* subsp. *nothofageti*, beech fingerfern; *Hakea microcarpa*, smallfruit needlebush; *Histiopteris incisa*, batwing fern; *Isolepis nodosa*, knobby clubsedge; *Leptocophylla juniperina* subsp. *parviflora*, mountain pink-berry; *Leptospermum lanigerum*, woolly teatree; *Leptospermum nitidum*, shiny teatree; *Leptospermum rupestre*, mountain teatree; *Leucopogon* sp., beardheath; *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, myrtle beech; *Nothofagus gunnii*, deciduous beech; *Oxalis magellanica*, snowdrop woodsorrel; *Pelargonium* sp., geranium; *Persoonia gunnii*, mountain geebung; *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius*, celery top pine; *Pittosporum bicolor*, cheesewood; *Poa gunnii*, gunns snowgrass; *Podocarpus lawrencei*, mountain plum-pine; *Restio* sp., cordrush; *Richea pandanifolia*, pandani; *Richea scoparia*, scoparia; *Richea springelioides*, rigid candlestick; *Sphagnum* sp., moss; *Sprengelia incarnata*, pink swamp heath; *Stereocaulon ramulosum*, lichen; *Tasmannia lanceolata*, mountain pepper; *Telopea truncata*, Tasmanian waratah; *Trochocarpa cunninghamii*, straggling purple-berry

### **Fungi**

*Aurantiporus pulcherrimus*, strawberry bracket fungus; *Mycena interrupta*, pixie's parasol

### **Fauna**

*Macropus rufogriseus*, bennetts wallaby; *Thylogale billardieri*, Tasmanian pademelon; *Vombatus ursinus*, common wombat

### **Birds**

*Acanthiza ewingii*, Tasmanian thornbill; *Calyptorhynchus funereus*, yellow-tailed black cockatoo; *Corvus tasmanicus*, forest raven; *Gallinula mortierii*, Tasmanian native hen

## **SKEMPS DAY Saturday 27 April - Macro-invertebrate Monitoring**

Fifteen members and three visitors arrived at Skemps to an overcast day to participate in the macroinvertebrate monitoring. While John and Noel headed off to collect the water sample from the specified area on Skemp Creek, the fire was lit and a table and the monitoring equipment were set up in the Centre so members could sort the critters into the containers in comfort.

Returning with the water sample John informed us that there were possibly two small freshwater crayfish in the sample and to watch our fingers when getting a sample from the bucket. The two crayfish were found and separated into other containers so members could take photographs of them. The larger one was missing a pincer but he still seemed to get around ok.

Peter had brought his two grand-daughters along today and they enthusiastically helped with the activity, before heading out for a walk to find mountain pepper. Two new members, Samantha and Garland arrived and after being shown the Centre, a small group headed out for a walk to show them around the property.

Meanwhile it was quiet in the Centre with John and Prue identifying the sorted waterbugs and Kath and Claire on BBQ detail. Noel was helping Peter, a visitor, who was tidying and collecting up fallen and rotten wood that was unsuitable for firewood, and relocating it to a central pile for later burning.

During lunch John mentioned that he had seen a bat inside the Centre recently and suggested that someone carefully open up the sack hanging above the stove, we couldn't believe our eyes, there were two tiny little bats snuggled up together.

After lunch we enjoyed a piece of cake with Tom Treloggen who would be celebrating his birthday the next day.

Committee members who were in attendance had a brief special meeting, discussing the opening of the property to the public through open days, the need for material for presentations and display boards and the storage of the material. Some suggestions will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

At the end of the day, the water sample was returned to its originating location before heading home.

Karen Manning

## **GENERAL MEETING 7 May 2013 - JOHN SKEMP MEMORIAL LECTURE GUEST SPEAKER John Tongue - *Twitching and Birdline Tasmania***

Prue introduced John to the members with a brief overview of his burgeoning interest in birds, assisting with bird counts throughout Tasmania and his greater involvement with the local bird organisations.

John started by telling us that in July his family would be heading off to Queensland for yet another bird watching holiday. While his daughter complains that they seldom seem to just go on holidays she has been able to see over 600 species on these twitching expeditions and he stated that it would be much cheaper if the children did not go along but that they do not want to be left behind.

For a trip like this he would read reports by others, put out requests for information on various networks, scan field guides and magazines. Trying to see what they have not seen and find where they might go. He often gets requests from those planning a trip to Tasmania and many will be travelling here soon as the southern boobook has been split into two species, the other being the Tasmanian mopoke.

John then spoke of the many sources of information for twitchers, interested beginners, researchers, birding guides, property developers and town planners. Starting with the older magazines *Wingspan* put out by Birds Australia and *The Bird Observer* put out by Bird Observation and Conservation Australia. These organisations have merged to form Birdlife Australia and put out one great magazine, the quarterly *Australian Bird Life*.

While magazines make for interesting reading, have wonderful articles and terrific photography they are not always that immediate. John brought up a blog on the internet by the Hobart bird watcher Alan Fletcher. Bloggers will highlight their own photography, answer pertinent questions and report sightings of interest in their area.

The site featured pictures of freckled ducks in Gould's Lagoon which have turned up in other parts of Tasmania including Tamar Island and Lake Dulverton. There has been an explosion of the population on the mainland and some have made their way to Tasmania. John would check blogs for the area he wished to visit but relies on the blogger to keep it up to date and the last entry on this site was March 2007. It is easy for Blogs to fall out of date and become stale and John stated that it is hard to produce something new, relevant and interesting for the readers.

John stated that Birdlife Australia (<http://birdlife.org.au/>) had an ongoing bird atlas-ing program and he had an old copy of the Tasmanian Bird Atlas. It recorded the species of birds noted in Tasmania with dots where they had been seen. Birdline Tasmania goes to specially defined locations for a set time and records everything seen there and that data is centrally processed for an atlas for each species. This is helpful to researchers and compilers of field guides for their distribution maps. It is also helpful to mad twitchers as he was recently asked to identify a bird on King Island. The asker thought it might be a little bittern but it was probably a nankeen night-heron and John explained that although a bittern might turn up it would not be found in any atlas as being on the island.

Where in the past you might wait for years for a new atlas these days it is on the web and John opened the internet on his computer to demonstrate. Birdlife Australia maintains an online atlas (<http://www.birdata.com.au/>) which has information for each species of Australian bird, perhaps not exceptionally up to date, but more up to date than waiting for the hard copy to come out. John zoomed into Tasmania for the nan-keen night heron and as he went in closer we could see sightings close to Launceston and further in we could see that it was at the Tamar Island Wetlands. To get to the higher resolutions you need to be a registered user. On the site you can also click on 'get list' for a bird lists for locations down to one degree.

John showed us his e-mail with one from Christopher Watson reporting on the Alice Spring forest wagtail. This was part of a birding notice type of web site called 'Birding-Aus' with an e-mail notice board list. Using this people can send in a sighting, ask a question or raise a bird relevant topic and this is disseminated, via e-mail, to all members on the list. John stated that depending on the contents people might give a collective yawn, pack their bags for far off destinations or claymores of disagreement might erupt over some contentious issue between parties who hold differing points of view. Recently a European widgeon, a type of duck, was seen in Carnarvon WA and soon experts had confirmed the identity and twitchers had gone there to add the bird to their lists.

Just recently the first forest wagtail has turned up in Alice Springs causing the same flurry of activity with Birding-Aus and Birdlife Australia.

John then talked about Eremaea Birds (<http://www.ereamaea.com/>) with its many links and features related to birds, although what many people know about the sight is Birdline. He then showed the many Birdline sites and he is one of three moderators for Tasmania and he was on the net with his computer and demonstrated the site. The site is owned by Richard and Margaret Alcorn of Melbourne and each section (geographical areas) of the site has one or more moderators to ensure the effective running of that branch of the web site. Some parts of the site are automated so that if a sighting is posted it automatically goes to all three moderators. Although other sites allow information to automatically be sent everywhere immediately it is also important for information to be accurate and relevant. The information from Birdline feeds into the national atlas project and is therefore available to research projects, local councils and developers and so forth and needs to be accurate as well as fast and is therefore moderated. John stated that anyone could report a sighting by logging onto the Eremaea site, clicking onto report a sighting, filling in the many fields to make the sighting of best usefulness to the most number of people. You can post a photograph

although this is not essential but you must have an e-mail address so the moderator can get back to you.

John amused members by suggesting that if you reported a cassowary walking down the main street of Mowbray the moderator might ask whether you had someone else who also saw it or what had you had been drinking beforehand? There are certain criteria that Eremaea looks for to make sure the sighting is relevant. John suggested we post all sightings and the moderators will give feedback as to why a particular report has not been published based on the criteria. The criteria for a general posting is that the bird is outside its normal range, early arrival or late departure if it is a migratory species, if it is classed as a threatened species or if it is normally hard to see or hard to find. If it is sighted outside its normal habitat it is worth reporting or if it is uncommon in that area.

Some are listed as a highlight with a blue star and these should be rare or endangered or should be classed as a vagrant to Australia or that area or be part of an eruption or a bit of an explosion above the usual numbers or to just be in unusual numbers.

The next category is a mega and to be in this the sighting must be a rare vagrant. John said that we did not get the widgeon in Tasmania but if someone was to report a leather winged kite or a grey falcon here in Tasmania that would be a mega.

John described the process for reporting a sighting to Birdline. The moderators receive an e-mail almost as soon as it is posted and use the details to decide if it is a mega or a highlight and should drop everything in order to post it. If it is less urgent it can wait till they get home from work.

To process the sighting a moderator logs onto the site and enters the details including a number which can be used to quickly find the entry to edit it. They can also edit typos and grammar and hold the posting pending further investigation.

Some twitchers report whole list of birds seen at a place on one occasion and this could be posted to the site as it can become a key fragment in the whole atlas process and he showed us such a reporting from Tamar Island Wetlands.

These reportings are also important in the management of invasive birds. An invasive species is one that does not naturally occur in an area and has the potential to get out of control and have a negative impact on agriculture or other business or the ecology and habitat of other species. Obvious ones like sparrows and starlings we are all aware of but others such as rainbow lorikeets, crimson rosellas and even kookaburras in the Tasmanian context may come as a bit of a surprise to some. John spoke of the common (Indian) myna found nesting in Devonport and Simon Fearn stated that these were found in the roof of the surf club. John said there were more reports of a common myna in Devonport recently, although nothing reported as yet to the birding sites, but we do keep an eye out for them.

For some other species such as little and long-billed corellas, lyre birds and crimson rosellas it is more a matter of watching and waiting to see if rare sightings become more common or if known populations begin to spread into new areas. For others like the rainbow lorikeet the Department has control programs in place. The track record of this bird in other areas where they have been released or escaped has not been good and their threat to the critically endangered swift parrot here in Tasmania is particularly relevant.

John did not want to dwell on the negative but simply to show that tools like Birdline Tasmania can have many and varied uses not just for the twitchers like himself and encouraged us to use it and consider contributing something.

He finished his talk with the wonderful quote “There is a whole amazing world of birds out there just on the other side of our binoculars. So let’s do all that we can to help one another to enjoy it.”

Simon started the questions by asking John’s opinion on whether old records of the rainbow lorikeets being self-introduced in the past could be trusted. John stated that he relied on Michael Sharland’s, *A Guide to the Birds of Tasmania* 1981, for historical records and the rainbow lorikeet is not mentioned even though other single sightings are reported. He gave much information on this bird and his experience with it on the mainland and various parts of Tasmania, before answering other questions.

Tom thanked him for his talk and presented the Skemp Memorial Medallion with another round of applause from an appreciative audience. Noel Manning

### **FIELD TRIP Saturday 18 May - East Beach & Georgetown Wildlife Sanctuary - Seashore life & Birds**

Thirteen members and four visitors travelled to East Beach to catch the low tide to wander about the rocky point to explore the rock pools and low tide zone for marine life. Once we were all together and ready to hit the beach, vice president, Judith Handlinger, welcomed Gwen and Adelaide, our new junior members to the Club and presented them with their badges.

On the beach there was a slight breeze, with the tide at its lowest, we headed to the point where our first find was a reddish brown iridescent sea urchin in a rock pool, it was identified from our books as *Centrostephanus rodgersi*, which has been noted as eliminating kelp and other large seaweeds in Tasmania, Victoria and NSW.

We spent an hour and a half combing the rock pools in the higher rocky parts of the point and further afield on the flatter rocky foreshore where we found many sponges, anemones, crabs and sea grasses. Returning for lunch we discussed our finds and shared camera images, before travelling to the George Town Wildlife Sanctuary to look at the birds on the foreshore.

It was rather cold on the mudflats with a stiff breeze coming in from the strait. There were no birds in the immediate area, but with binoculars and a telescope, Prue, Jo and John saw herons, gulls and oystercatchers in the distance.

In George Town we found a little café on the Esplanade called Belle’s where we continued chatting over coffee and cake, before heading home. Karen Manning

*Cirripedia*, barnacles; *Galeolaria caespitosa*, calcareous tubes polychaete worms; ? *Xenostrobus* sp., mussels; *Lomis hirta*, stone crabs; *Notomithrax ursus*, decorator crab; *Asteroidea* sp., sea stars blue; *Coscinasterias muricata*, eleven arms; *Patririella calcar*, eight armed cushions stars; ? *Centrostephanus rodgersii*, rodger’s sea urchin; *Ceratosema brevicaudatum*, short-tailed sea-slug; Marine worm; *Celleporaria cristata*, lace coral; *Hormosira banksii*, Neptune’s necklace; *Phyllospora comosa*, sawtooth weed; *Actinia tenebrosa*, waratah anemone; green-striped anemone;

*Tethya bergquistae*, pink golfball sponge; rockpool sponges - pink, reddish brown, purple, greenish-yellow; *Austro-chochlea constricta*, ribbed top-shell; *Bembicium nanum*, striped conniwink; *Cellana* sp., limpet; keyhole limpet; *Chlorodiloma odontis*, chequered top shell; *Cominella lineolans*, lineolated cominella; *Cominella lineolata*, lined whelk; *Diloma concamerata*, wavy top-shell; *Ethminolia vitiliginea*, blotchy top-shell; *Ischnochiton australis*, southern chiton; *Nerita atramentosa*, black nerite; *Patelloida alticostata*, tall-ribbed limpet; *Scutus antipodes*, common elephant-snail; *Sypharochiton pelliserpentis*, snakeskin chiton; *Para-blennius tasmanianus*, Tasmanian blenny; Shrimp

Birds East Beach - *Charadrius ruficapillus*, red-capped plover; *Fulica atra*, eurasian coot; *Haematopus longirostris*, pied oystercatcher; *Larus pacificus*, pacific gull; *Thinornis rubricollis*, hooded plover; *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*, little black cormorant; *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*, pied cormorant; *Poliocephalus poliocephalus*; hoary-headed grebe

Birds George Town Wildlife Sanctuary - *Charadrius bicinctus*, double-banded plover; *Cygnus atratus*, black swan; *Egretta novaehollandiae*, white-faced heron; *Haematopus fuliginosus*, sooty oystercatcher; *Haematopus longirostris*, pied oystercatcher; *Larus novaehollandiae*, silver gull; *Larus pacificus*, pacific gull; *Sarcocornia* sp., glasswort

## **SKEMP WEEKEND - Sat 25 and 26 May - Working Bee and Fungi**

On Saturday eight members arrived to reorganise the library and move non-library items to a storeroom. This was necessary as the Club had received a bequest of books from Ruth Upson for the Club's collection and there was not enough room to house them. We also wanted to sort through other paper based items located in the Library for information relating to the Club's history and materials to be used in displays and other promotional opportunities for the Club. Meanwhile Peter was outside in the sheds identifying and recording items for the Assets List.

By lunchtime we had moved many items into the storeroom, consigned some to the garbage and put others aside for relocation. We then had a well deserved break outside in the sun enjoying our meal and the usual socialising. At the end of the day we were very pleased with our achievement with many hands making light work.

One couple stayed overnight and opened the Centre up early Sunday morning for members who arrived to look for fungi. Following a cuppa and a chat, the group headed to an area near the Loop Track where we had found some interesting fungi last year. We looked around for an hour or so while taking many photographs of fungi before heading back to the Centre for lunch. While we were out a few more members had arrived.

After lunch we walked up the Power Track where we found many *Cordyceps Gunnii* on the edge of the track. From here we headed across to the Tyre Track which was very dry and not favourable for fungi. Walking out to the Fire Station we found a few clusters of yet to be identified fungi under the pine trees before returning to the Centre and eventually home.

Karen Manning

Fungi identified: *Bisporella citrina*, yellow fairy cups; *Byssomerulius corium*; *Calocera*

sp., yellow stagshorn; *Cordyceps gunnii*, dark vegetable caterpillar; *Discinella terrestris*, little suns; *Heterotextus peziziformis*, golden jelly bells; *Hygrocybe* sp., waxcap; *Mycena* aff. *epipterygia*; *Mycena interrupta*, pixie's parasol; *Mycena* sp., light brown with white rim; *Mycena viscidocruenta*, ruby bonnet; *Mycena* sp., white cap; *Scleroderma cepa*, earthball; *Trametes versi-colour*, rainbow fungus; *Tremella fuciformis*, jelly fungus

## 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:

**June 18 - Helen Statham** - Central Australian Plants, Deal Island and Sea Spurge

**July 16 - Club night**

## FEDERATION OF FIELD NATURALISTS CLUBS WEEKEND GET-TOGETHER - Port Sorell on 11–13 October 2013

Members are invited to attend this weekend of interesting activities and field trips hosted by the Central North Field Naturalists. RSVP to Robin Garnett, email [robin@rubicon.org.au](mailto:robin@rubicon.org.au) or phone 0438 002 615. Closing date for bookings 1 October.

### Program outline

#### Friday 11 October

**4pm onwards** - arrive at Camp Banksia, corner of Pitcairn and Anderson Streets, Port Sorell ; **Evening** - BYO Barbeque Field Nats Quiz - Challenge between Field Nats groups

#### Saturday 12 October

**Morning** - visit Phil Collier and Robin Garnett's conservation property, Rubicon Sanctuary at 241 Parkers Ford Road, Port Sorell ; **Afternoon** - Visit Hawley Reserve, end of Arthur Street Port Sorell ; **Evening** - Indian Banquet (\$20 per person), talk by Phil Collier *Threatened plant species in the Port Sorell area* at Camp Banksia

#### Sunday 13 October

**Morning** - Survey *Thelymitra antennifera* population at Narawntapu ; National Park.

**Lunch** - BYO picnic at Narawntapu National Park

**Accommodation and home base** - Camp Banksia, Corner of Pitcairn and Anderson Streets, Port Sorell

**Bunk room accommodation** - \$26 per person per night, some limited camping permitted - \$20 per person per night, bring your own towels and bedding including pillows, beach nearby for walking and swimming

**Cooking** - in shared small kitchen, saucepans, crockery and cutlery provided, inside and outside barbeques available, inside or outside seating for meals

**Meeting room** - is across a courtyard from the bunk rooms, chairs, tables, heating, tea and coffee making facilities

## **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)