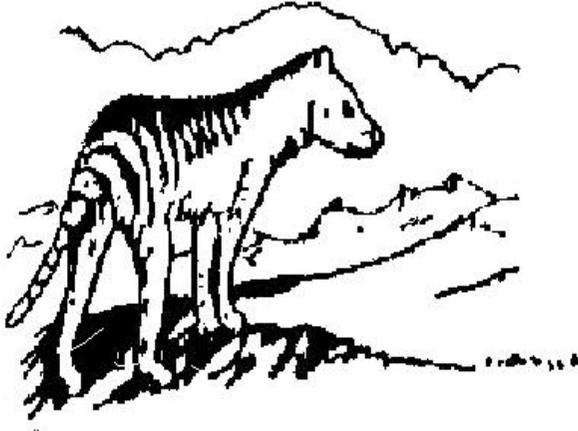


# THE LAUNCESTON NATURALIST

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. 5**

**June/July 2013**

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

## PROGRAM

### AUGUST

- Tuesday 6**                    **General Meeting - Guest Speaker: Jeff Wright - Kelp and Climate Change**
- Wednesday 14 -**        **Field Trip: Maria Island**  
**Friday 16**
- Sunday 25**                **Skemp Day**

### SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday 3**                **General Meeting - Guest Speaker: Phillipa Alexander - Bird Photography**
- Sunday 8 or 15**        **Field Trip: to be advised**
- Saturday 28**            **Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club in Launceston - program of activities will include a BBQ and Astronomy at Skemps, and trips to Notley Fern Gorge, Tamar Island, Cataract Gorge, Carr Villa Reserve, Queechy Lake and QVMAG**  
**Sunday 29**  
**Monday 30**

### OCTOBER

- Tuesday 1**                **Annual General Meeting dinner - Riverview Hotel, Kain's Restaurant, 6.00 for 6.30pm (see details this newsletter)**
- Sunday 6**                **Field Trip: Badger Head to Windred Creek**
- Friday 11 -**            **Federation Get-together - Camp Banksia hosted by CNFNC (details this newsletter)**  
**Sunday 13**
- Sunday 27**                **Skemp Day - Water Monitoring**

### NOVEMBER

- Tuesday 5**                **General Meeting - Speaker: Simon Fearn - Insects**
- Friday 8 -**                **Field Trip: Binalong Bay area and Winifred Curtis Reserve, Scamander**  
**Sunday 10**
- Saturday 23**                **Skemp Day**

**For short notice changes to program visit**

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

## COMMITTEE/GENERAL MEETING

**Skemp Report** - Noel stated there was little being done at Skemps other than maintenance and fire wood gathering and that the new mower has still not been used in any serious way as the animals were plentiful and keeping the fresh grass down. He reported that three Holly trees that had been found had been dealt with. These trees appeared to be suckers coming up from where other trees had been removed.

### **Puggle**

**June** - Prue asked members which of the following birds would not be seen during the outing to Tamar Island Wetlands. The list was the Eurasian coot, swamp hen, musk duck, native hen, hoary-headed grebe, pied heron, dusky moorhen, black duck, cattle egret and the Australian bittern. John correctly named the pied heron.

**July** - John asked members how many of the eleven Tasmanian conifers were actually pines. Peter Ralph correctly answered 'none'. Of the conifers, 5 are cypress and 6 are podocarpus. There are 9 endemic conifers. None of Tasmania's conifers are strictly pines, that is, belonging to the genus Pinus.

### **Sightings**

**June** - Prue reported nearly 50 chestnut teals feeding on the mud flats at Gravelly Beach, a musk duck doing a mating dance for swans and at Waterhouse a tiger (spotted-tailed) quoll feeding on road kill. Alison reported native hens in the bush near Strickland Avenue, Hobart. John reported seeing rainbow lorikeets in Launceston and a wedge-tailed eagle on Targa Hill Road. Shirley reported a yellow wattle bird in her garden.

**July** - Simon reported that the first autumn rains had brought Swift Moths to his yard. He then demonstrated on the whiteboard how we distinguish between the male and female moths by their antenna and the unusual way the female moth lays her eggs which are dropped randomly and the larva digs into the ground to survive. He also had a collection of this moth for members to view. Simon also reported seeing Cootamundra wattles in bloom near George Town in late June. Prue reported the nankeen night herons and spoonbills at Queechy Lake during our last field trip. Tom Treloggen described some Rosellas he had seen and could not identify as they did not match photos in his bird books. There was some discussion on what these might be.

### **General**

**New Members** - Andrew Pitt has recently upgraded his membership to family, so we would like to welcome his partner Rebecca and their son Jonathan. We would also like to welcome the following junior members, Gwen and Adelaide Churchill, Jesse Prior and Sarah Habel, grand-daughters of members. We look forward to you joining us at Club activities.

**Club Calendar 2014** - there were enough images submitted to print two calendars. They are now available for purchase at \$5.00 each. See Karen Manning who will have copies at meetings, field trips and Skemp Days. If you would like to make a purchase at a time other than above, please contact Karen on 6344 2277 to make arrangements.

**A Guide to Flowers and Plants of Tasmania** - Karen also has copies of the Club book available for sale at \$22.00 at all Club activities.

**'The Year That Was'** - Members are invited to submit images from 2013 Club activities for a slideshow to be shown at the December meeting. Images should be submitted on either CD or USB or by email to Prue Wright prior to 31 October. Prue can be contacted by email [redgum101@gmail.com](mailto:redgum101@gmail.com)

**Photographic Competition** - The competition will be held after the general meeting in December. Due to time limitations to erect the display of entries and judge them, there will be a limit of three entries per member. Members at the meeting will judge and vote on the entries; prizes will be awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places.

#### **Conditions of entry**

- **Print topics:** subjects are to be related to Tasmanian flora, fauna, minerals, Tasmanian landscapes and astronomical events observed in Tasmania. Animals and plants must occur naturally in Tasmania. Introduced species or garden varieties of Tasmania are not acceptable.
- The subject of each print must be identified. For landscapes, the identification must include the aspect of nature study that it illustrates.
- **Print size:** up to A4 (30cm x 21cm)
- **Print medium:** colour or monochrome (black and white)
- Must be simply mounted on cardboard at least.
- Entries to have been taken since January 2012.
- The competition is open to members only and prints should be brought in on the night.

#### **Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club visiting Launceston 28-30 September** -

Members from Chinchilla will be visiting Launceston from Saturday 28 to Monday 30 September, departing on Tuesday 1 October. They will be staying at the Tamar Villas in Riverside and have hire cars.

It is planned that the LFN Club will hold a barbecue at Skemps on the Saturday night to welcome them and have telescopes available to watch the stars. Other suggestions for the program are trips to Notley Fern Gorge (ferns), Tamar Island (wetland bird life), Cataract Gorge (geology and wildflowers) Carr Villa Reserve (wildflowers), Queechy Lake (birds) weather permitting and QVMAG (natural history displays).

It would wonderful if members were available to help with the barbecue on

Saturday night and also accompany our visitors during the field trips. Members who would like to help on the Saturday and /or accompany our visitors on the field trips should contact Noel on 6344 2277 who will advise you when the program is finalised, for your consideration.

## **NOTICE OF AGM DINNER MEETING - TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER**

The Launceston Field Naturalists Club will hold it's AGM dinner at Kains Restaurant at the Riverview Hotel Charles Street Launceston, meet at 6.00pm for 6.30pm. There is plenty of off-street parking behind the venue and in William Street. We will be ordering from their normal restaurant menu. Members who would like to attend should indicate their intention in the appropriate book at the next general meeting or contact Noel on 63442277. RSVP prior to 26 September please.

All four Executive positions (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) and six Committee positions will become vacant at this meeting. If you would like to volunteer yourself or nominate another member for a position, nomination forms are available with this newsletter, at the general meeting and also from the Secretary if you need extras. The nomination form with the candidates written consent should be lodged with the Secretary no later than 10 days prior to the AGM.

## **EAST BEACH FIELD TRIP 18 May (extra)**

In addition to the marine life reported in Newsletter XLVI No. 4, the following were also seen at East Beach.

*Epopella simplex*, simple volcano barnacle; *Meridiastra calcar*, 8 armed cushion star; *Parvulastra exigua*, 5 armed cushion star; *Microcyphus annulatus*, a small white urchin; *Aplysilla rosea*, pink sponge; *Sphaciospongia purpurea*, purple sponge; *Protosuberites sp.*, yellow sponge; *Haematopus fuliginosus*, sooty oystercatcher.

Corrections to the report are:-

The short-tailed sea-slug reported as a *Ceratosoma brevicaudatum*, was a *Ceratosoma amoenum* which is a smaller slug and more likely to be found at Low Head and the *Centrostephanus rogersii*, Rodger's sea urchin reported was a *Heliocidaris erythrogramma*, a purple sea urchin.

## **GENERAL MEETING 4 June**

### **GUEST SPEAKERS - Tania Jenson and John Robinson - Quarantine**

Noel gave a brief introduction of our guest speakers who would be talking about quarantine.

Tania started the talk by asking if anyone was not familiar with quarantine and that we would have experienced the checks at airports or on the Spirit of Tasmania. After a question Tania told us that the dogs were mainly interested in fruit, vegetables, plants

and fish products and animal products which have been missed at the international level giving Tasmania a double level of protection. She pointed out that the dogs can detect fruit up to 72 hours after it has been handled. There are three dog handlers in the north, one in Launceston and two in Devonport. One dog has recently died and a new one is being trained.

At this point John pointed out that the quarantine employees in Tasmania work under both commonwealth and state legislation, depending on whether something is coming from interstate or overseas.

Quarantine Services is an agency within the Biosecurity and Product Integrity Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE). Quarantine Services is aimed to keep Tasmania free of exotic pests and diseases which would have a significant impact on our primary industry, our environment and our lifestyle. Quarantine Services Tasmania handles all international requirements for the Commonwealth administering the horticultural export program, import clearance program and international quarantine.

Quarantine Services works under federal legislation with the main legislation being the *Plant Quarantine Act* as well as the *Animal Health and Welfare Act* and the *Seeds Amendment Act* and Tania stated that she coordinates the main program which is domestic quarantine. This program covers the two major airports of Hobart and Launceston, the regional airports at Devonport, Wynyard and Burnie as well as cargo, freight and passengers at the ports. During the cruise ship season Quarantine Services checks cruise vessels from a commonwealth and state perspective as well as clearing the cargo vessels which handle imports such as cattle, sheep, goats and plant nursery stock, and bulk and seed grain.

Quarantine Services does a pest and disease surveillance programs, the main one being fruit fly. Tasmania has a national and international reputation for being a reliable producer of the best fruit and vegetables and recognition for area freedom from fruit fly. Our freedom from a range of serious pests and diseases gives our producers a significant advantage over other states and allows them into the key markets of Japan, Korea, United States, Taiwan and China with very limited import requirements and one particular advantage, we do not have to fumigate.

Around the states there is a network of 900 fruit fly traps with weekly visit in the summer months and in winter it drops down to once a fortnight. The climatic conditions of Tasmania means the opportunity for a fruit fly to establish is very limited because it is just so cold with the suitable period limited to six weeks in summer. John told us that there are three fruit flies of interest, the Mediterranean, Queensland and Papaya fruit fly.

John held up the Plant Quarantine Manual with all the rules for importing and stated that it is updated yearly with the internet version being updated more regularly. Rules apply to everyone including hobby farmers and individuals. Restricted products can be destroyed or an importer will be given the option to return banned items.

The biosecurity risk is a product of two factors, the likelihood of a pest or disease reaching Tasmania and the consequences to the state if it was to establish here. Because of our free trade obligations scientific evidence is needed to ban a product not just a desire to keep something out. Although the Plant Quarantine Manual is only updated annually and printed in December in an emergency situation a pest or disease

can be declared an outbreak and declared a disease there and then. An example of this was the introduction of myrtle rust in 2010.

Internet purchases are an issue as e-bay will not give information on Tasmanian restrictions. If something banned is detected in the post it will be seized and permission to keep it probably not be given. You need to ask before you make a purchase and some items which would be permissible on the mainland may not be allowed in Tasmania.

Myrtle rust was first detected in NSW in April 2010, by December it was detected in southern Queensland and is now in northern Queensland, the ACT and Victoria.

In July 2010 the State Government via the Primary Industries minister declared that all plants and plants parts of the Myrtaceae family to be a restricted plant under the *Quarantine Act*. Tania also suggested campers and bush walkers, especially those returning from the mainland, should clean their boots and equipment before walking in Tasmania to prevent the spread of this and other diseases. She then described the myrtle rust as a fungus that can have a serious effect on a large number of plant species, that it is a single rust and a species in the Guava (Eucalyptus) rust family. It appears to behave in a similar way but not identical. The rust is a serious pathogen effecting plants in the Myrtaceae family including Australian natives such as bottle brush, tea tree and eucalyptus and can be carried on non-affected plants and transferred to susceptible plants. It can also be carried by insects and strong winds. A slide showed the distinctive bright yellow to orange spores of the rust. In Tasmania even non host plants imported into the state receive a fungicide treatment and we were given wallet cards on the myrtle rust and asked to report any sightings. To deal with a sighting it is essential not to collect samples, take a photo, a GPS reading if possible or otherwise note as much detail as possible such as location, affected tree type and then to report the matter as soon as possible to 1800 084 881.

John then gave a presentation on the didymo freshwater algae and slides showed rivers choked with the thick algae blooms on the stream beds. The trailing clumps in the flow give the algae its common name of rock snot. Didymo is a noxious organism common to North America, Europe and parts of Asia and since 2004 it is known in about 150 rivers on the south island of New Zealand. It can be transferred by a single drop and can last in moist conditions for some time. John then detailed the restrictions placed on bringing fishing gear back to Australia from a trip to New Zealand and the importance of cleaning this gear using detergents or bleach and making sure it is dried afterwards. It would be a major environmental pest in Tasmania as well as a problem for hydro electricity production. A short New Zealand produced video gave more information on the problem, what it looked like and the need to clean fishing gear.

John's other talk was on hydatid disease and he pointed us to a jar with a sheep lung affected by the hydatid cysts. The Tasmanian government introduced a successful eradication program in the early 60s for this animal disease which has caused deaths in humans. It is illegal to give cooked or uncooked offal from cattle, sheep, goats and pigs to dogs in Tasmania which has been declared provisionally free of the disease since 1996. There are strict controls on the importation of dogs to Tasmania which must be treated when arriving with law enforcement dogs, dogs for the blind and greyhounds being exempt.

There followed over 25 minutes of questions and answers before Judith

thanked our guests for their very informative talk and asked members to show their appreciation.

Noel Manning

## **FIELD TRIP - Saturday 15 June - Tamar Island Wetland, Queechy Lakes and Old Mac's Farm**

Members attending today's field trip met at the Tamar Wetlands. To start the morning John Duggan, a volunteer at the Tamar Wetlands Centre, gave us an informative talk. He covered the geological and glacial influences which shaped the Tamar Valley, aboriginal occupation, European settlement and the history of the wetlands area. He also spoke of the threat to the wetlands from the introduced mosquito fish, *Gambusia holbrooki*. Following the talk John pulled a gambusia net and showed us some of these tiny fish that were introduced by a landowner in the 1990s to control mosquito larvae in his dam. While waiting for John we heard the common froglet, *Crinia signifera*, calling.

After enjoying the sun on the verandah of the Centre overlooking the first wetland, we reluctantly headed out in strong wind to walk to the island to have our lunch, noting the birdlife on the way. The tide was out, but there were not as many birds on the mudflats as we had hoped, probably due to the wind.

We enjoyed our lunch out of the wind to the north of the hill in a sunny position watching the fairywrens flitting in and out of the longer grasses and the forest ravens soaring overhead. Walking up onto the islands hill we came across spruce, radiata pine, cedar, elm, cypress macrocarpa and rhododendron trees. John Duggan had told us that some of these exotic trees had been planted in the late 1890s when the island first became a picnic spot. The native trees seen are in the list below. We called in at the bird hide on our return but did not record any new bird sightings.

Returning to our vehicles we headed to Queechy Lake in Newstead where we were very excited to see three royal spoonbills and six nankeen (rufous) night herons. John Elliott, who is a regular visitor to this area, had seen these herons previously and hoped that they would be present during this visit and we were not disappointed.

From there we continued on to Old Mac's Farm for afternoon tea and to check for birds in their wetland. Overlooking the wetland area from the café we could not see any birds on the water. Following a relaxing cuppa and chat we headed to the warmth of our homes.

Karen Manning

### **Tamar Wetland**

**Birds** - *Anas castanea*, chestnut teal; *A. superciliosa*, pacific black duck; *Ardea alba*, great egret; *Charadrius ruficapillus*, red-capped plover; *Circus approximans*, swamp harrier; *Columba livia*, rock pigeon; *Corvus tasmanicus*, forest raven; *Cygnus atratus*, black swan; *Egretta novaehollandiae*, white-faced heron; *Fulica atra*, Eurasian coot; *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, white-bellied sea-eagle; *Hirundo neoxena*, welcome swallow; *Larus pacificus*, pacific gull; *Malurus cyaneus*, superb fairywren; *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*, little black cormorant; *Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus*,

crescent honeyeater; *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*, hoary-headed grebe; *Porphyrio porphyrio*, purple swamphen; *Rhipidura albiscapa*, gray fantail; *Vanellus miles*, masked lapwing

**Flora** - *Acacia melanoxylon*, blackwood; *Acacia* sp.; *Allocasuarina littoralis*, bull oak; *Athrotaxis cupressoides*, pencil pine; *Bursaria spinosa*, prickly box; *Eucalyptus globulus*, Tasmanian blue gum; *Exocarpus cupressiformis*, native cherry; *Gahnia* sp., sedge; *Lomandra longifolia*, sedge; *Melaleuca ericifolia*, coast paperbarks; *Meliccytus dentatus*, spiky violetbush; *Phragmites australis*, southern reed; *Solanum laciniatum*, kangaroo apple; *Triglochin procera*, greater water-ribbons

### Queechy Lake

**Birds** - *Ardea alba*, great egret; *Egretta novaehollandiae*, white-faced heron; *Fulica atra*, Eurasian coot; *Nycticorax caledonicus*, nankeen (rufous) night heron; *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*, little pied cormorant; *Platalea regia*, royal spoonbill; *Tadorna tadornoides*, Australian shelduck; *Tribonyx mortierii*, Tasmanian native-hen; *Vanellus miles*, masked lapwing

### SKEMP DAY - Sunday 23 - Fungi

Arriving to a heavy frost on the ground at Skemps today, we were grateful to Peter who had arrived early and had lit the fire so the Centre was already warm. Around ten thirty John set off to look for fungi and take some photographs, Irmgard and Heinz headed for the Watergate track to do the same, while a group of five headed to the Zig-Zag Track. Few photographs were taken, as we all found our search areas fairly dry and only small amounts of fungus.

The group explored the forest area a little further afield of the Zig-Zag Track. It was here that Tony and Christine located 3 large holly bushes whose red berries had caught their attention; a job referred to the Tuesday team for removal. We also found a tiny red spider /mite, whose photograph revealed it as having a white stripe across the top of his body and a white tail.

Taking a short-cut through the forest onto the Zig-Zag Track we came across large bones of what was probably a cow, green with mosses and partially covered laying in leaf litter. Exiting the bush to the roadway we emerged into a still heavily frosted area even though it was now after midday.

A couple of members made early departures, while others stayed and had their usual barbecue lunch followed by another walk to show Noel and John the location of the holly bushes for removal.

Following a coffee and chat around 3 pm, members departed as the clouds lowered around the hills and the day grew colder. Karen Manning

Fungi: *Bisporella citrina*, discs; *Calocera* sp., branched jelly fungi; *Clavaria miniata*, Flame fungus; ? *Gloeoporus taxicola*, shelf-fungi; *Heterotextus multinus*, Golden jelly-bells; *Mycena interrupta*, Pixies parasols; *Mycena viscidocruenta*, Ruby bonnets; *Trametes versicolor*, Rainbow brackets

## GENERAL MEETING 2 July

### GUEST SPEAKER - Paul Flood - Cave Dwellers

Paul started his talk by stating that the caves were a unique experience and that the karst environment is a remarkable landscape with the Mole Creek Karst National Park declared in 1996. There are nearly 400 caves with new ones still being found. When a new cave is discovered the Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmania, examines the cave to see if it has special values which would make it necessary to restrict access, with high values gated caves having access sometimes limited to one visit per year to a registered caving club.

Showing pictures of the creek near the entrance to Marakoopa Cave Paul told us what we do not have in the Mole Creek caves. There is no megafauna or bats (at a constant 9 degrees it is too cold) and the caves are not the biggest, longest, oldest or the most spectacular. What these caves do have is bugs and he welcomed us to the dark side.

The caves have distinct habitable areas, the entrance zone, the intermediate zone and the dark zone and these are inhabited by animals divided into three groups. Troglonites are entirely dependent upon caves for their survival and are modified for life underground. Trogloniles spend their entire life cycle underground, but can survive in suitable, similar environments on the surface. Troglonenes spend a part of their lifecycle underground and this group includes animals which use the caves as a den. In answer to a member question Paul defined trog as meaning cave.

Paul described the Tasmanian cave spider, *Hickmania troglodytes*, at 16 to 18 cm across the legs it is possibly Tasmania's largest spider, but all legs. This is part of the adaptation to the dark as nearly all cave creatures have evolved very long appendages because it is all about a sense of touch as they are not using their eyes, even though this spider is sighted and known to live away from caves. Paul described the unique webs of these spiders which are in the horizontal plain and according to Paul the webs have no pattern, just a hotch-potch of mismatched lines left to right running all over the place. The spiders sometimes spin two webs, one above the other and not all strands are sticky and these spiders have other unique features such as the male being larger than the female and having crooks in the second pair of legs designed to hold the female while mating.

Most cave creatures have a slow, low energy life and appear to be long lived compared to similar creatures outside. Male spiders will sit for a week plucking at the web of a female waiting to be invited for mating. The talk was backed with wonderful pictures of spiders and an egg sac divided into two chambers and Paul told us that there could be 120 to 140 hatchlings each season and it had been observed that a year after hatching a dozen could still be on the mother's web. We also learnt that they will eat each other. The silk of the web is being investigated for possible commercial applications because it is so sterile nothing will grow on it such as fungus, mold or bacteria.

We were then introduced to the glow worm, *Arachnocampa tasmaniensis*, the only one in Tasmania and we have the largest public glow worm display in Australia. Each state and New Zealand has its own species. The glow worm, which is really a maggot, lives in wet caves, a cave with running water, which brings in aquatic larval

stage insects which get caught in pools and eventually hatch. The resultant insects are attracted to the light on the sticky web and get caught to form a major food source for the glow worms. These glow worms can control the light intensity whereas with other light producing insects it is either on or off. In winter the light is at its dimmest to conserve energy and it has been found that the glow is brightest at midday and dimmest at midnight on a day to day basis even though the worm is in total darkness. The subtle changes in air movement may be the trigger for differences in the brightness.

In the next slide we were introduced to the mountain shrimp, *Anaspides tasmaniae*, which Paul told us was slate grey on the outside of cave, opaque near the entrance as with the one in the slide and white for those in the darker inner reaches. The animal could reach 5 cm, a good size, but as he said, it would still take a lot for a decent feed.

Further excellent slides showed us the other main creatures of the caves with a description by Paul, anecdotes of his interaction with them and the limited number of times he had seen the rarer ones over the years.

The first of these slides showed a modern looking spider, from the family *Amaurobiidae*, and Paul informed us that it was related to modern spiders. After a question from Simon, Paul stated that these spiders have pigment ranging from a pale tan to a jet black even though they live in the dark zone.

The cave cricket, *Micropathus cavernicola*, is around 45 to 50 mm and is a true trog, having the extra-long legs and feelers of the cave dwellers. The crickets congregate around the cave entrances, as the sun goes down, leaving to feed outside and are a major source of nutrients in the cave system.

The cave harvestman, *Hickmanoxyomma gibbergunyar*, is a small animal, 5 or 6 mm across the body, from the arachnid family and although it does not have venom, fangs or silk glands Paul said that he would still refer to it as a spider. The animal is unique in that it has mouth parts and can eat. It also has eyes on the top of its body which point up and it will move slowly between the glow worm webs and eat the worms.

The cave pseudo-scorpion, *Pseudotrypanochthonius typhlus*, is very rare and small, 3 to 4 mm long, tailless and there may be more than one species. Work on proper identification is not possible because there are not enough to do the research without affecting the population of a cave.

Paul suggested the blind cave beetle, *Tasmanotrechus cockerilli*, is the ultimate cave adaption creature as this small and rare animal has not only lost its eyes it also does not have an optic nerve suggesting it has been in the dark a long time.

The next creature was Dave's micro spider, found by our guide for the Sunday field trip and as yet unnamed. The picture showed the spider on a lens cap and it was half the size of the letters A and P in the picture. The letters spell 'MADE IN JAPAN' and are only just over a millimetre long. We will see these spiders on the weekend in webs spun across small holes in the flow stone. Paul said that all he saw was a white spot in the middle of the web and wondered what they could possibly eat. They are a predatory animal yet he suggested the only thing they could bite down on was a bacteria.

From a question from Alison we learnt that there are slaters in the cave which are very small and not on the tourist track. More questions followed and the members had

been asking questions throughout the talk. Alison gave the thanks and asked members to show their appreciation.

Noel Manning

## **FIELD TRIP - Marakoopa Caves - Sunday 7 July**

On a very cold and frosty Sunday morning sixteen members and 3 visitors met at Inveresk to travel to the Marakoopa Caves. As we drew closer to our destination the distant mountains were a real picture with a good covering of snow.

At the Caves ticket office another eight members and three visitors joined us. Paying for our tickets we headed to the carpark closer to the caves, some by car and some on foot via the Fern Glade Walk. The short walk followed the creek which came from inside the cave. With the sun's rays glistening on the droplets of rain on the ferns and other plants it made the walk very pleasant.

At the caves entrance our guide Dave Lee first took us on the "Underground Rivers and Glow-worm Tour" where we saw stalactites and stalagmites, pools with water gently trickling over the edges and underground streams gushing with water and the glow-worms. Lights out deep in the cave revealed how completely lightless the cave was. Dave filled us with information about the caves and the animals that inhabit them. Dave pointed out a few cave spiders (*Hickmania troglodytes*), spider sacs and horizontal cobwebs as we entered the cave, a cave cricket (*Micropathus cavernicola*) and later located a mountain shrimp (*Anaspides tasmaniae*) in a quiet part of the stream. At a particular spot where the cave is narrow, Dave entertained us by humming producing an eerie, didgeridoo like sound for those standing close to him. This only works with a reasonably deep voice. We joined another group to view the glow-worms (*Arachnocampa tasmaniensis*) and had to wait for our eyes to adjust to the dark, the longer we stayed the brighter the glow from the worms.

Following a short break for some daylight, we re-entered the caves and did the "Great Cathedral Tour" and viewed the glow-worms from a higher position in the cave system. These caves were dryer than the first cave and we climbed quite high up in them to the Great Cathedral where we saw a seam of fossils, magnificent columns and dry flowstone areas. It was also in this cave Dave pointed out the new species of "micro spider" that he had found which is waiting to be officially described and named. Our last stop in these caves was at "The Gardens" which everyone agreed was the most spectacular sight so far, with its impressive columns, stalagmites and stalactites, and a reflection pool in a small nook of the overall large cave.

Tom Treløggen thanked Dave on behalf of those present. Viewing both caves was an unexpected bonus and we appreciated the time he spent with us, his wealth of information and friendliness.

Out of the caves we found that the earlier sunshine had turned into drizzle as we headed to the hut in the carpark to eat our lunch around 2pm. Before we headed off in different directions to visit other options before home, Tom Treløggen welcomed Sarah Habel our newest junior member to the Club and presented her with a new member kit.

Places visited on the return to Launceston were the Honey Farm in Chudleigh

for honey tasting and ice-creams and 41° South at Redhills to taste the salmon and honey, and for coffee.

We were joined by Yoav from *Tasmanian Geographic* online magazine, his friend Ange who is a nature photographer and family and friends of other members. We hope that these visitors enjoyed themselves and welcome them to attend field trips with us in the future.

Karen Manning

## **SKEMP DAY - National Tree Day - Saturday 27 July**

Participating in Planet Ark's National Tree Day the Club hosted an open day at Skemps to carry out maintenance on the revegetation of some of the grasslands and creek surrounds that had been planted during the last couple of years. These trees had been planted to restore the riparian vegetation along Skemps Creek and to link all the remnant forest on the property. Planet Ark provided advertising on their web site and posters while Stevenson's Toyota at Kings Meadows assisted by displaying these posters and provided sausages, hamburgers, bread and sauce for a barbecue lunch.

Early this morning, Club Secretary Noel Manning was interviewed by ABC radio's Chris Wisbey during his program 'Weekends'. Peter Cundall was also involved and discussion centred on the property in general, the growing of trees and advertising the day's event.

Arriving at the boom gate at 9.30am there was already a car waiting, Bill has come in to help from Winkleigh. After setting a fire to warm the Centre and having a hot drink, quite a few more people had arrived to help.

Heading off to the Federation Corridor we started checking individual plants, trimming excess growth and generally tidying up plants, and removing stakes, bags and wire-guards from plants that had not survived. The removed items were placed in areas where they could be readily collected later.

Later arrivals were past members Ivan and Joann Ebdon and family, Ivan having heard the interview earlier as did other arrivals Sarah, Susan and Lachlan.

With many participants the work was now being undertaken below the Top Pond along both sides of the creek and when they reached the creek crossing at 12.30pm, finished for lunch. Unfortunately the barbecue was not ready due to the damp sticks not wanting to burn, so everyone retired to the Centre for a hot drink and a chat while waiting patiently for lunch. Once the barbecue plate was hot enough lunch was cooked in no time and everyone tucked in. There wasn't a free seat in the Centre, chairs were brought in from outside and I sat on an eski. It was great to see everyone enjoying themselves and freely chatting with our visitors.

After lunch, Club President, Tom Treloggen welcomed Jesse Prior, a new junior member to the Club and presented her with a new members kit. He also thanked everyone for their assistance today and gave recognition to Stevenson's Toyota for providing the items for our lunch.

With the day becoming overcast, some people went for a walk, while others departed for the day. During the final tidy up, the last of the removed stakes, bags and wire-guards were collected and moved to appropriate storage places before the last few also headed home following a very productive day.

Karen Manning

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

Members are reminded that the Central North Field Naturalists club is hosting the next Federation of Field Naturalists weekend. There will be various interesting activities and field trips to Rubicon Sanctuary, Narawntapu National Park and other places near Port Sorell.

Accommodation is at Camp Banksia, Corner of Pitcairn and Anderson Streets, Port Sorell, bunk room accommodation will cost \$26 per person per night and there is some limited camping permitted costing \$20 per person per night.

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.

## **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 meeting will be on:

August 20 - Anna Povey

September 17 - Chris Moore, Launceston City Council

## **QVMAG EXHIBITIONS**

### **ANZANG Nature Photography**

ANZANG Nature Photography is an annual competition which encourages photography of nature and wilderness in Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and the New Guinea region. Entries are open to local and international photographers.

In 2012 more than 1300 entries in 11 categories were submitted from 265 photographers in eight countries.

ANZANG was founded by Perth, WA based surgeon Dr Stuart Miller in 2003. The South Australian Museum took ownership of the competition in 2009 and Dr Miller remains as ANZANG's patron.

When: 24 August to 27 October 2013

Where: John Lees Atrium, Mezzanine

Admission: Free

Presented By The South Australian Museum

### **Into the Wild - Wilderness photography in Tasmania**

Highlighting the artistic talent of key Tasmanian wilderness photographers and the impact that this type of photography has had on Tasmania, the exhibition charts the development of wilderness photography from its earliest days to the present.

Featured photographers include Allport, Spurling, Beattie, Smithies, King, Perrin, Thwaites, Truchanas, Dombrovskis, England, Blakers, Bell, Stephenson, and Walch. Tasmania has been at the forefront of wilderness appreciation from the early preservation efforts, the conservation movement and tourism promotion. It was these photographers who championed efforts to recognise and preserve Tasmanian wilderness by creating evocative images that encouraged so many to appreciate and visit these landscapes.

When: until 16 February 2014

Where: Gallery 3, QVMAG, Royal Park

Admission: Free

Presented By QVMAG

Source: [Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery](#)

## **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 or by email [skempbookings@yahoo.com.au](mailto:skempbookings@yahoo.com.au) 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)