



Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

BULLETIN

Editor: Geoff Fenton EMAIL fenton@southcom.com.au

Quarterly Bulletin

No 331

Jul 2008

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. People of any age and background are welcome as members.

For more information, visit our website <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au>; email info@tasfieldnats.org.au; write to GPO Box 68, Hobart, 7001; or phone our president, Janet Fenton, on (03) 6239 6443.

Program

General Meetings start at 7:45pm on the first Thursday of the month, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania.

Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting outside the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery entrance in Macquarie Street. Bring lunch and all-weather outdoor gear.

If you are planning to attend an outing, but have not been to the prior meeting, please confirm the details, as late changes are sometimes made.

Thu, 3 Jul	Meeting 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tasmania. Assoc Prof Stewart Nicol, zoologist at the University, will present ' <i>Echidnas - a slow life but cool sex</i> '.	
Sat, 5 July	Excursion to Tinderbox Hills, south of Hobart. Meet at 9.00am outside the Museum in Macquarie St, Hobart to car-pool; then proceed to Blackmans Bay along Roslyn Ave, then Brightwater Rd to Estuary Drive, arriving about 9.30am. From the end of Estuary Drive the walking track follows the Tinderbox ridgeline southwards for a few kilometres.	
Thu, 7 Aug	Meeting 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas. University entomologist Peter McQuillan will speak on <i>Insects associated with native plants</i> .	
Sun, 10 Aug	Excursion , yet to be announced.	
Thu, 4 Sep	Meeting 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas. Sarah Lloyd and Ron Nagorcka from Central North Field Nats will present " <i>Dialect, repertoire and imitation: The language of birds</i> ".	
Sat, 6 Sep	Excursion to Orielton Lagoon to see wading birds.	
Thu, 2 Oct	Meeting 7.45pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas.	
4 or 5 Oct	Excursion , yet to be announced.	
17,18,19 Oct	Flower Show in the Hobart City Hall; see page 5.	Federation weekend gathering at Weymouth; see page 4.

Lake Skinner, 6 Apr 2008

— excursion report by Abbey Throssell

Our April excursion was to Lake Skinner in southern Tasmania, attended by about a dozen members.

We began by walking up through rainforest, stopping to take pictures of some striking eucalypts whose bark wrapped around their trunks in a corkscrew pattern, and some very pretty moss twining its way up the trunk of a small tree. The track was very wet in many places, providing somewhat of an obstacle course of large puddles, rocks and fallen trees. Many different plant species were observed along the track (see list below), including the distinctive pandani (*Richea pandanifolia*).

We stopped for morning tea about halfway up to the lake, and were joined by a number of invertebrates, including pill millipedes, a tenebrionid beetle (*Adelium abbreviatum*), a chrysomelid beetle (*Paropsisterna* sp.), and a tiny winged insect that appears, upon later examination of pictures, to be a psocopteran. (Psocoptera are an order of small and easily overlooked insects that feed on fungi, lichens and plant debris.) Continuing up the track, we came out of rainforest into sub-alpine habitat, and eventually reached the lake.

We settled down for lunch while enjoying the view over the lake, in very light rain. Some more critters joined us, starting with a couple of small stoneflies who were soon dwarfed by their much larger brother (or sister!), the quite spectacular *Eusthenia*, a stonefly about 4cm long (**pictured**). Kevin disturbed a small, dark and very sleepy skink from its bed in a pile of rocks; it was quite chilled and slow-moving, and also very cute, thus finding itself a popular camera target. Returning to the carpark, the final critter for the day was a little frog under a big rock, dark with orange markings on its legs.



Snail report [Kevin Bonham]

I have had some good trips to Lake Skinner in the past, and found 12 species on a previous Field Nats trip, but this time I could only manage the four listed below. *E. ricei*, found in the plantation around the carpark, was a new record for this locality and a minor range extension.

Caryodes dufresnii; *Tasmaphena sinclairi*; *Paralaoma* sp. "Hartz"; and *Elsothera ricei*.

Plant species list [James Wood]

<i>Agastachys odorata</i>	<i>Eucryphia lucida</i>	<i>Orites revolute</i>
<i>Anodopetalum biglandulosum</i>	<i>Eucryphia milliganii</i>	<i>Persoonia gunnii</i>
<i>Anopterus glandulosus</i>	<i>Euphrasia</i> sp.	<i>Phyllocladus aspleniifolius</i>
<i>Atherosperma moschatum</i>	<i>Gaultheria hispida</i>	<i>Prionotes cerinthoides</i>
<i>Athrotaxis cupressoides</i>	<i>Hakea lissosperma</i>	<i>Richea milliganii</i>
<i>Athrotaxis selaginoides</i>	<i>Leptospermum nitidum</i>	<i>Richea pandanifolia</i>
<i>Carpha alpina</i>	<i>Lomatia polymorpha</i>	<i>Richea scoparia</i>
<i>Cenarrhenes nitida</i>	<i>Monotoca submutica</i>	<i>Tasmannia lanceolata</i>
<i>Coprosma quadrifida</i>	<i>Nothofagus cunninghamii</i>	<i>Telopea truncate</i>
<i>Eucalyptus coccifera</i>	<i>Nothofagus gunnii</i>	<i>Trochocarpa gunnii</i> .
<i>Eucalyptus pulchella</i>	<i>Orites acicularis</i>	
<i>Eucalyptus subcrenulata</i>	<i>Orites diversifolia</i>	

Fungi [identified by Genevieve Gates, from photos]

<i>Bisporella citrina</i>	<i>Armillaria novae-zelandiae</i>	<i>Dermocybe cramesina</i>
<i>Cortinarius</i> sp (possibly)	<i>Ascocoryne sarcoides</i> *	* target species of Australian Fungimap project
<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i> (possibly)	<i>Mycena interrupta</i> *	
	<i>Marasmius</i> sp.	

Liverworts [Amanda Thomson]

Heteriscyphus conjugatus; *Heteroscyphus conjugatus*; *Chiloscyphus austrigenus* subsp. *okaritanus*.

Pelagic bird trip, Eaglehawk Neck, 4 Jun 2008

— excursion report by Neil Klaer

Bill Wakefield had given a talk the previous Thursday on seabirds that might be encountered offshore in eastern Tasmania, and had arranged for us to see them for ourselves on a boat trip from Eaglehawk neck.

The outing was well attended, with Bill Wakefield, Geoff and Janet Fenton, Don, Mike Neil Klaer, Mike Fuller, Jim Patterson, Den Robin, Geoff Robin, Jane Catchpole, Peter Crofts, Ruth Haynes and Rosanna Cameron attending, with the boat skipper “Jumbo” John and crew Gary. We all met at the boat ramp at Pirate’s Bay at 7:30am and left the bay and headed south at about 8:00am. The weather was good, with just a few clouds and light winds. We traveled south to just off Waterfall Bay and could see the Candlestick at the southern entrance of Fortescue Bay in the distance and Hippolyte Is further offshore. The skipper turned us to the east towards the Hippolyte as groups of gannets were the first larger seabirds that we spotted.

There was a number of seals [58 Australian Fur Seals counted] at the Little Hippolyte and Hippolyte, and we stopped to watch one throwing a fish or perhaps a cuttlefish into the air. The first albatrosses were spotted, these were Bullers. We then headed towards the shelf edge which is about 10 miles from shore on this part of the coast – relatively close compared to most other places. As we neared the shelf edge the number of seabirds increased. By this time we had seen Fairy Prions, Giant Petrels, Cape Petrels, White-chinned Petrels, as well as numbers of Shy (**pictured**) and Bullers Albatrosses.



The boat was stopped and we began burleying to attract more birds. A seabird smorgasbord of fish frames, chicken skin, tuna oil, shark liver and sliced bread was thrown at regular intervals from the back of the boat, and there were plenty of takers. There was much excitement as a dark coloured juvenile Wandering Albatross was seen amongst the feeding frenzy and almost everyone tried to get a good look or a photo. We won’t name names, but a couple of our number were a bit ill at this point, and not as excited as the others. Don noted that there was apparently food that was “better than sliced bread” – the birds would not touch bread if other more tasty offerings such as chicken skin were available.

The next few hours were spent feeding the birds and moving up and down the shelf edge. In all we saw six albatross species: Shy, Bullers, Yellow-nosed, Black-browed, Wandering and Royal. By about 2 o’clock we turned towards shore and slowly motored back to Pirate’s Bay, stopping by the Tasman Arch and the picturesque sea cliffs near there en route. After disembarking most of us headed to the Eaglehawk Café for a debrief and coffee.

Pelagic birds observed [Bill Wakefield]

Bird Species	Number	
	at one time	whole day
Silver Gull	8	20
Kelp Gull	15	28
Pacific Gull	2	8
Crested Tern	26	45
Gannet	9	40
Black-faced Cormorant	33	65
Short-tailed Shearwater	6	20
Sooty Shearwater	4	12
Fluttering Shearwater	1	1
Great-winged Petrel	6	16
White-chinned Petrel	5	11
White-headed Petrel	1	3

Common Diving Petrel	1	1
Southern Giant Petrel	3	5
Wilson’s Storm Petrel	1	2
Grey-backed Storm Petrel	2	2
Cape Petrel	6	9
Fairy Prion	12	600
Shy Albatross	70	150
Black-browed Albatross	3	6
Yellow-nosed Albatross	1	2
Bullers Albatross	7	60
Wandering Albatross	5	7
Southern Royal Albatross	1	2
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	1
Fairy Penguin	6	8

***Tasmanian Fungi* – a new website**

You may be interested in checking a new "Tasmanian Fungi" website constructed by club members Genevieve Gates and David Ratkowsky in the School of Plant Science, University of Tasmania. The website is at http://www.utas.edu.au/docs/plant_science/tasfungi/ .

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, 8 Jun 2008

— excursion report by Janet Fenton

The RTBG was a festive place on the Sunday morning of our excursion, as the *TreadLightly EnviroFest* was getting underway as we arrived. Ten of us strolled through the gardens, a pleasant place on a winter day, initially keeping clear of the festival.

We admired the Spotted Gum - *Corymbia maculata* (**pictured**) from Australia's eastern seaboard, and the Tasmanian flora section where we were particularly impressed with the *Pimelea* sp. nova from Schouten Island, and the fine example of *Eucalyptus risdoni*, with drooping branches of silvery glaucous juvenile leaves. We were entertained by yellow wattle birds displaying and generally acting silly as they do, and grey fantails, crescent honey-eaters, and eastern rosellas.

Later, we dispersed to investigate various displays of interest at the festival, all aiming to encourage the public to live life with a small footprint.

Some of us joined a tour of the old *Beaumaris Zoo*, an insight into the way animals were kept during the 1930s. The Hobart City Council opened the zoo at the Domain site in 1923, with Arthur Reid the curator. Reid, incidentally, was an original member of TFNC. Arthur and his daughter Alison enlivened a 1926 TFNC meeting by bringing along a lion cub for 'observations and exhibits'!



Federation Weekend, 17-18-19 October 2008, Weymouth

—to be hosted by Tasmanian Herpetological Society

Weymouth is between Georgetown and Bridport, at the mouth of Pipers River.

The leader will be geologist and local shack owner Henry Shannon— apart from studying the geology of the Weymouth/Pipers River area, there will be plenty of opportunity for botanizing and birding. On Sunday we will inspect re-growth nine months after the Bellingham fires of Jan 2008, and compare effects on coastal heath, eucalypt forest and pine plantation.

There will be basic accommodation in the Salvation Army camp at Weymouth. The usual facilities – bunkrooms with mattresses, bring own bedding; male and female ablution block; kitchen facilities and fridge. Bring Friday night meal, and breakfasts & lunches. There is space for tents & campervans. Accommodation costs \$8/person/night.

Saturday night meal will be at *Tam-O-Shanter Golf Club* — two course meal for \$17/person.

Its now time to book! Bookings: Sue Woinarski 6382 6280, or zics@bigpond.com

Australian Plants Society *Wildflower Spectacular* – 17-18-19 Oct 2008

With many of us heading north for the Federation weekend, we do not have enough volunteers staying in Hobart to person our usual stand at the Flower Show. Instead we will mount a static display that does not require an attendant, although any Field Nats going to the show are welcome to lurk there and answer questions.

If you can help put up a display (Wed 15, Thur 16 Oct) phone Janet 6239 6443. The theme this year is '*Native plants for every garden style*'. This presents a fairly open slate for our display.

Devil research— TFNC publications and archives help

David Obendorf has recently been in touch with regard to TFNC publications and archives. An article in the 2007 edition of *The Tasmanian Naturalist* (vol 129, pp. 65-81), 'Devils in the Alpine Project', has been pivotal in research into the possibility of sufficient gene differentiation in western populations of Tasmanian Devils to limit the spread of the transmissible and fatal Devil Facial Tumour Disease.

David has found *A Century Afield* and TFNC records in the State Archives useful in tracking down past history of the fox in Tasmania.

In 1941, the Club objected to fox fur farming proposals for Tasmania. Chiefly through the club's representations, Parliament resolved that foxes should not be introduced to Tasmania for fur farming. In 1949 the club requested that the government should conduct an inquiry into the report that a pair of foxes had been released in Tasmania. As there have been records of other fox introductions to the State, David is suggesting that Tasmanian Devils have been a significant controlling factor in the past.

David's notes can be seen at <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/Bulletins/bull331-FoxHistory.pdf>

Photo credits p2 Stonefly James Wood
 p3 Shy Albatross Geoff Fenton
 p4 Spotted Gum..... Geoff Fenton

Excursion photos can be seen at <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/ExcnPhotos/ExcnPhotos.htm>.

