



Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

BULLETIN

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Quarterly Bulletin

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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 secretary on mobile 0418 942 781.

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Program

General Meetings start at **7.15pm** for 7.30pm on the first Thursday of the month, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania.

Excursions are usually held the following Saturday or Sunday, meeting at 9.00am outside the Museum in Macquarie St, Hobart. 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, 5 Nov	Meeting 7.15pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tasmania. Our guest Karen Gowlett-Holmes will present ' <i>Tasmanian Marine life- a photographic view</i> '. Karen is leading marine biologist, photographer, and author.
Sat, 7 Nov	Excursion to investigate intertidal life at Bambra Reef, Roaches Beach, near Lauderdale in southern Tasmania. Because of the tides, this will be an afternoon trip. Meet at 2.30pm outside the Museum in Macquarie St, Hobart; then rendezvous at 3.00 at Roaches Beach, at the end of Bambra St, Lauderdale.
13, 14 & 15 Nov	Federation get-together , to be hosted by the <i>North-East Tasmanian Field Naturalists</i> at the <i>Field Study Centre</i> at Mt. Cameron in the north-east of Tasmania. See page 2.
Thu, 3 Dec	Meeting 7.15pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas. This is <i>Members' Night</i> , when club members are invited to give short presentations on topics of interest, or summaries of the year's events. Please bring a contribution for supper afterwards.
Sun, 6 Dec	Excursion & barbeque. A pleasant walk from Taronga Rd along the <i>Alum Cliffs Track</i> to Browns River at Kingston Beach, where we will wind-up the Club year with a barbeque. A car shuffle will be organised, and times & details will be announced.

Jan 2010	No meeting or excursion in January.
Thu, 4 Feb	Meeting 7.15pm in Life Sciences building, University of Tas. Guest speaker Elizabeth Daley will present ' <i>Pest or Guest: Learning from Nature.</i> ' Dr Daley is a Research Associate with the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania, and best known to field nats as the author of the excellent Tasmanian insect book ' <i>Wings</i> '.
6 or 7 Feb	Excursion to a reserve of Elizabeth Daley's near the East Coast. Details will be announced.

Taroona shell excursion — 6 Sep 2009

Report by Kevin Bonham

The outing to Taroona Beach, held in the afternoon for tide reasons, attracted about 23 members and guests. On a low (but not especially low) tide we sampled for shells starting at the south end of the main beach and heading south to the rocks south of Hinsby Beach. Shells collected by members at the south end of the main beach were gathered together on a large platter and Simon Grove picked through them identifying them all, and showing pictures of many of the species in Margaret Richmond's books. In total, 91 species of marine mollusc were collected.

You can view Simon's list at <http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/Bulletins/bull336-TaroonaShellList.pdf>.

Our examination of the catch was attended by a large fast-running isopod and several species of staphylinid beetles.

The most surprising find of the day was a juvenile cowry collected by Simon on Hinsby Beach; the stripes showed it to be *Notocypraea comptoni*, which is seldom collected around the Derwent. Indeed, Simon hasn't collected the species from Taroona before in all his collecting trips there.

I had a bit of a bash for terrestrial invertebrates, collecting the snails *Magilaoma "tasmanica"* and *Laomavix collisi* (both already recorded from Taroona) and the now obligatory bristletail (haven't examined it closely yet but it's very likely *Machiloides hickmani*, which was first described from nearby Kingston Beach).

Mt Cameron Field Study Centre

The *North-East Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club* will host the Federation get-together, 13 ~ 14 Nov, at Mt. Cameron. There is 25 km² of eucalypt and sheoak woodland, wet sclerophyll gullies and patches of heath-land, with a diverse flora and spectacular mountain scenery. Good facilities for children too.

For more detail and to book, phone *North-East's* secretary Louise Brooker, on 0417 149 244, or email brooker@vision.net.au

For those attending, there are detailed directions below. The Centre has a landline phone: 6355 2215, but note that mobile phone service is patchy in the area. The centre will be open from 4pm on Friday afternoon.

From Bridport:

Travel east towards Gladstone; about half an hour along that road the surface changes to gravel, coinciding with the Banca Road junction. Do not turn down this road but continue on towards Gladstone. After **8.5 km** of gravel road, turn right onto the Old Port Road. This road is not sign posted but there may be temporary signs attached to the fence saying 'Field Study Centre'.

Travel **6.9 km** along this road **without** turning off. You will come to a Y junction. Turn left at that point and travel a further **3.6 km** to the boomgates. Once through the boomgates, it is a further **2 km** to the Field Study Centre.

If you get to Gladstone, call in to the hotel and have a beer, then turn around and come back, you've missed the turn off!

If coming from Gladstone:

Travel towards Bridport. After a few kilometres, the sealed road turns to gravel. Travel a further 5.5km along the gravel and you will come to the Old Port Road. Turn left onto this road, it is not sign posted.

Travel **6.9 km** along this road **without** turning off. You will come to a Y junction. Turn left at that point and travel a further **3.6 km** to the boomgates. Once through the boomgates, it is a further **2 km** to the Field Study Centre.

Pelagic bird trips

Bill Wakefield

Pelagic bird observing boat-trips from Eaglehawk Neck, which still have vacant seats, are being run on Holiday Monday, 8 Mar 2010, and Saturday, 27 Nov 2010.

This is a time of year when we normally have at least 5 species of Albatross around the boat plus a good variety of petrels and shearwaters.

The route taken is generally down the coast to The Little Hippolyte then out to the Hippolyte its self. As we pass close in to the cliffs wonderful views are obtained of the Devils Kitchen, often from the inside, plus Tasman Arch and Waterfall Bay. A couple of underwater ridges that we pass over one running out from The thumbs and the other from the southern end of Fortescue Bay often cause upwellings attracting large feeding frenzies of birds, dolphins and seals. Gannets, Black-faced Cormorants, Crested Terns along with Silver, Kelp and Pacific Gulls all combining to make the spectacle. Sea Eagles are often present hunting in the area along with a Peregrine Falcon. This later species will hunt out at sea taking small petrels, which it eats back at its lookout.

After a trip round the Hippolyte and a look at the Seals sleeping on the rock ledges and in the caves, we then move out towards the edge of the Continental Shelf with its increase in seabird species searching for their food in the up-welling from the currents moving along its edge. During February we generally see Mako Sharks which often come up behind the boat and have a good old chew on the burley box.

The costs of these privately organised charters are shared equally amongst the participants and should be between \$100 and \$130 each. Would those wishing to enquire or book seats please contact Bill Wakefield on (03) 6228 0990 after 29 Nov 2009 (as Els and I will be away on Goose Is in the Flinders Group until then). There will be more information posted on the TFNC website.

Changes to *Bulletin*

The committee is considering changes to the bulletins, which have become longer of late.

The bulletin will be slimmer with fewer pages, keeping its primary function of informing members of our upcoming program of meetings & speakers, excursions, and other events. In future, trip reports in the bulletin will not include long species-lists — instead, these lists will be put on our website.

There is also the possibility of excursion reports going on the website as they come-in, and of being more closely linked with the excursion photos. What do people think?

We are also keen to lodge our species observations with the *Natural Values Atlas*. To this end, we plan to have a standard blank list (downloadable from the website) with appropriate headings for people to enter their observations, which they would then send to Mark Wapstra to collate and enter into the NVA.

Gellibrand Point — 8 Aug 2009

Excursion report by Anna McEldowney

Arm End Reserve at Opossum Bay wasn't a place that seemed to hold much promise as a refuge for native flora and fauna, having been grazing land until recently. However, in August, 12 Field Nats set off into the teeth of a howling gale to check out this reserve which Mark said had no reported records of anything much and the Natural Values Atlas showed no records for threatened flora from the whole of the Crown title. Before we had left the carpark John Reid reported sighting a pair of galahs mating on the power lines and after a few minutes walk we had found our first threatened species, *Cynoglossum australe*. This was closely followed by finding an echidna digging his way out of sight on the sandy cliff top. The headland, which juts northwards into the entrance to Ralphs Bay, is rabbit and weed heaven and includes the big three, African boxthorn, gorse and boneseed, while the pasture areas are thick with capeweed and sorrel. There are also areas of serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) and this weed alone may cause some serious management issues for the area.



We walked clockwise around the reserve to Gellibrand Pt., via the repeater tower at White Rock, morning tea at Mary Ann Bay, and the Gellibrand Vault, burial place of several of the Gellibrand family from the mid 1800s. Several people insisted that the walk was pointless unless we went right out to the point where we were pleased to see the predominant vegetation was *Correa alba* looking very healthy in spite of many years of drought and the largest plant of *Astroloma humifusum* most of us had ever seen, covered in flowers and its green edible berries.

We felt that we were walking on the dinner table as the stony foreshore was littered with crab remains and occasional fish bones – obviously the site is well used by sea birds.

The Spit, on the eastern side of the reserve, is a bird breeding area but the beach nearby provided a sheltered lunch spot and a chance to hear a spotted marsh frog in a pond behind the shoreline. High tides and waves had cut into the shore at Shelly Beach exposing fascinating layers of shell deposits, some of which were beach deposits and others were probably more of the middens which dominate the coastline of this reserve.

Bird list

Pied Oyster Catchers (Lauderdale and Hope Beach)
Sooty Oyster catcher (Hope Beach)
Red -capped plovers (carpark, Arm End Reserve)
Kelp Gulls
White fronted chats
Pacific Gulls
Swamp harrier
Flame robin
Black faced cormorant
Little black cormorant

Crested terns
Superb blue wrens
Skylarks
Goldfinches
New Holland honey eaters
Forest Ravens
Yellow-rumped thornbill
Starling
Little grass bird
Galahs

Marine life [Janet Fenton]

Piecrust Crab *Cancer novaezealandiae*

Decorator Crab *Naxia aurita*

Pebble Crab, Leucosiidae; (carapaces seen on the first bluff and live one seen in the water at lunch). I didn't count the spines on the posterior carapace!! - so can't be sure of the species. Karen Gowlett-Holmes gives the genus as *Bellidilia*. Alternative name *Philyra*. The genus seems to have changed from *Philyra* to *Bellidilia* according to Australian Faunal Directory (site maintained by KG-H).

Other fauna

Echidna

Possible wombat droppings

Spotted Marsh Frog (*Lymnodynastes tasmanienses*), heard in dam behind the Spit.

Flora (not including weeds)

*Cynoglossum australe** (coast houndstongue)

*Vittadinia Muelleri** (narrowleaf new-holland-daisy).

*(several sites added to NVA. Both represent minor range extensions/infillings of threatened species but are not unexpected based on nearby records and the habitat present— MW)

Pimelea glauca

Allocasuarina verticillata

Dichondra repens

Acacia melanoxylon

Austroanthonia spp including *A. setacea*, *A. pilosa*, *A. geniculata*, *A. penicillata*, *A. racemosa* var. *racemosa*

Poa poiformis var. *poiformis* (rocky shores) and *Poa labillardierei* var. *labillardierei* (pasture)

Einadia nutans subsp. *nutans* (nodding saltbush)

Juncus spp including *J. australis*, also *J. subsecundus*.
J. pallidus and *J. pauciflorus*

Lepidosperma spp including *L. laterale* and *L. gladiatum*

[with thanks to Mark Wapstra]

Flora (introduced species)

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)

African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*)

Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*)

Capeweed (*Arctotheca calendula*)

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

Federation daisy (*Argyranthemum frutescens*)

Cape Leeuwin wattle (*Paraserianthes lophantha* subsp. *lophantha*)

Snails [Kevin Bonham]

Native snails were hard to find at Gellibrand Point. In one patch of coastal shrubbery I found dozens of *Pernagera officeri* and a single *Magilaoma* "tasmanica", but apart from that it was no cigar all day except for a single large *Paralaoma caputspinulae* in open pasture.

Correa alba var. *rotundifolium*

Kennedia prostrata

Astroloma humifusum

Lomandra longifolia

Pteridium esculentum

Rhagodia candolleana subsp. *candolleana*

Austrostipa rudis subsp. *australis* also *A. flavescens* (rocky coastal sites), *A. stipoides* (coastal sites), *A. stuposa* and *A. mollis* (pasture)

Lagurus ovatus

Myoporum insulare

Plantago spp including *P. lanceolata*, *P. coronopifolia* (weedy spp) *P. hispida* (under sheoaks), *P. varia*

Distichlis distichophylla

Sarcocornia quinqueflora subsp. *tasmanica*

Atriplex cinerea

Eucalyptus viminalis

Hypoxis glabella var. *glabella*

Cape daisy (*Osteospermum fruticosum*)

Mallow (*Malva dendromorpha*)

Serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*)

Romulea rosea var. *australis*

Lion's ear (*Leonotis leonurus*)

Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)

Beta vulgaris subsp. *maritima*

Exotic snails were much easier to find, a mildly interesting record being *Vitrina pellucida* (see 2002 Tasmanian Naturalist).

Also, a bristletail (juvenile *Machiloides*) was collected and a pseudoscorpion and two large earwig species photographed.

Invertebrates [Lynne Forster]

Some encounters with species undergoing potential biological control provided interesting experiences during the walk.

Gorse, a weed of national significance, was our first victim. Colonies of gorse spider mite (*Tetranychus lintearius*) webs encased spiny gorse branches in white shrouds from which they eat the leaves. It is because they spin webs that they are called 'spider mites' though until now I had not appreciated how extensive their webbing abilities could be when they combine their efforts. Their small red bodies speckled the webs which also contained white remains from previous moults. The mites were introduced into Tasmania to control gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) in 1998. Predation by the introduced Chilean predatory mite, *Phytoseiulus persimilis* and the native coccinellid, *Stethorus histrio*, has reduced numbers of the mites (Ireson *et al*, 2003). At the base of the gorse bushes were other dense webs but these had circular entrance holes belonging to an *Amaurobioides* sp. spider that was not the expected species, *A. maritimus* (= *litoralis*).

Near the Spit dam swarms of horehound stink bugs, *Agonoscelis rutila* (Hemiptera: Pentatomidae) attracted us to the noxious weed *Marrubium vulgare* commonly known as horehound. The native orange and black bugs are typically found in clusters on horehound during winter where they suck sap from the plant but do not affect the weed's vigour. In summer the bugs disperse to eucalypts and other native species. Horehound is originally from the Egyptian desert extending to some parts of Europe, and was introduced as a medicinal herb and for beer brewing (Weiss and Sagliocco, 2000). One wonders where the bugs over-wintered prior to its introduction and how the ecology of the bugs might have changed following the arrival of horehound in Tasmania. Horehound is known to contain diterpenes (Knoss *et al*, 1997) which are natural insecticides, so the bugs would be likely to sequester these compounds for defence. Terpenes and phenols are also available from eucalypt and other native plant species (Cooper, 2001).

Horehound taints the flesh of sheep that graze upon it, though sheep eat it as a last resort, while the burrs cause felting of fleece (DPIPWE, 2008). The pale horehound plume moth, *Wheeleria spilodactylus*, (Lepidoptera: Pterophoridae) was first released in Tasmania by TIAR in 1997 at Sorell to control horehound (Ireson *et al*, 2000). The moth, whose larvae eat leaves, has four generations per year (Wills, 2000). We did not see any moths but photographed a lone caterpillar of the species on the ground near the shore.

List of invertebrate species (found mostly in the coastal strip just above high tide):

Beetles

- Adoryphorous couloni* (Scarabaeidae) on the beach at mid tide mark. These native, black, shiny, cockchafers feed on grass roots and are appearing on many beaches and city streets at this time of the year, having emerged from over-wintering underground.
- Mandalotus* sp nr *vascillans* (Curculionidae) clustered under rocks on bare earth near the dam.
- *Saragus costatus* (Tenebrionidae) pie-dish beetle
- *Sclerorhinus bubalis* (Curculionidae: Amycterinae) large weevil

Spiders

- Steatoda grossa* (Theridiidae) near the shore under rocks– dark with purplish brown abdomen and pale semicircle line anterior abd and blotchy pale spots
- Venatrix esposica* (Lycosidae) wolf spider under a large rock with remains of several meals – it was particularly fond of pie-dish beetles, large weevils and the occasional snail, *Theba pisana*.
- Laperousea quindecimpunctata* Linyphiidae under rocks near the shore on fine, small sheet webs
- beach jumping spider (Salticidae) on sand at high tide mark

-*Amaurobioides* sp. Anyphaenidae silken tubes at the base of gorse bushes and under rocks just above high tide where it feeds on isopods.

Other Invertebrates

-*Agonoscelis rutila* (Hemiptera: Pentatomidae) horehound stink bugs- black and orange.

-*Tetranychus lintearius* (Acari) gorse spider mites and webs

Yellow and black caterpillar-(Crambidae: Odontiinae) in gorse flower,

-*Wheeleria spilodactylus* (Lepidoptera) horehound plume moth larva under a rock.

-*Anthela ocellata* (Lepidoptera:Anthelidae) a woolly bear caterpillar that feeds on grasses.

-*Apina callisto* (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) caterpillar of the day flying pasture moth which feeds on dock and plantain.

-*Ligia* sp slaters at high tide mark and above.

-*Cercophonius squama* (Scorpionida) scorpion under rocks on sand and grass

-*Labidura truncata* (Dermaptera) 30mm, a native earwig with pale sides in coastal areas but is darker inland. Feeds on crickets (*Teleogryllus commodus*) and caterpillars held in its cerci (large posterior pincers). Found under rocks in the grass and on the shore at high tide level.

-*Amblyopone australis* (Formicidae) ant nests in sand above high tide mark

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Wills, E. 2000 The release and establishment of two biological control agents of horehound (*Marrubium vulgare* L.) in south-eastern Australia. *Plant Protection*

Correction

Arthur Clarke notes that the cave cricket referred to in Bulletin 335, page 7, is likely to be *Micropathus tasmaniensis* rather than *M. kiernani*.

Excursion photos will be posted at

<http://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/ExcnPhotos/ExcnPhotos.htm>

