

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST



August 1993

#192 Vol 17.7

KANGAROO ISLAND part 2

Next day we went back to Kingscote via American River, following the road alongside Pelican Lagoon. We'd been told by the Rangers at Seal Bay that there were Glossy Black Cockatoos at American River, and I wanted to see them. A local directed us to where they had been seen in Bay View Street. She also told us that they had been seen down the end of a walking track which continued from the end of the main street and followed above the coastline for a couple of miles. We'd been told that we would find the birds feeding in the casuarinas which are their main food source. It was a lovely walk and the day was fine. From where we turned off the Highway at Pelican Lagoon we saw Swans, White-faced Herons, Little Pied Cormorants, White-fronted Chats, Cape Barren Geese, Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers, Scarlet Robins, Wrens, White Ibis, Grey and Chestnut Teal, Red and Little Wattlebirds, Brown Currawongs, Mudlarks, Willy Wagtails, White-browed Scrub Wrens, Brown Thornbills, a pair of Golden Whistlers, a Galah (pale form) at a nest, and Azure Kingfishers - but no Glossy Black Cockatoos.

While we were at Kingscote and Emu Bay we were amazed at the number of White-faced Herons, groups of up to 15, and at one place on the Emu Bay road near a beautiful pink lake there were over 25 of them feeding in a paddock.

On the way back to Penneshaw I kidded Doug to detour via American River again, and try again to see the cockatoos as it was getting late and I felt they ought to be coming in to roost. He agreed, and we drove back up Bay View Street, but as we drove down on to the main street again there was still no sign of them, until I looked up into a partly dead eucalypt behind the Wanderers Rest Motel, and there they were! Nine of them with a few galahs. Despite the fading light they looked beautiful when they spread their tails, the red just glowing, despite the low light. It was definitely the highlight of the day. We drove out to Cape Willoughby and Chapman's River the next day. The view from the balcony of the lighthouse is quite something and looks across to two small islands called The Pages. I wonder why. The name intrigues me. We had morning tea nearby at Windmill Bay, where the beach consists of a whole mass of round granite boulders. There's the remains of a fishing boat that was wrecked there 2 or 3 years ago when the watchman went to sleep. No one was lost. Chapman's River, where we had lunch, is a lovely

picnic, camping and fishing spot. Its possible to watch the fish in the clear water of the river under the footbridge. We had a barbecue lunch there - sausages and bread! - but the pair of Australian Ravens who arrived a bit late missed out on sausages, and settled for pieces of bread. One managed to pick up three pieces one after another and carried them off, just to make sure no one else got any!

There were lots of other birds at this spot too, mostly New Hollands and Red Wattlebirds!

Sunday was spent driving along side tracks that lead down to the coast between Penneshaw and American River - places like American Beach (pocket handkerchief sized), Browns Beach (another camping and picnic area), Island Beach (which had a lovely patch of paperbarks growing among the rocks on the edge of the beach) and Sapphire town, which was surveyed but never settled and is now private property. Further on we turned towards the south to Pennington Bay which Flinders saw from the nearby Mt Thisby. It was here that I at last spotted the Hooded Plovers - I had been told at Seal Bay that they could be there.

Monday, our last day on the island, we spent walking around Penneshaw and visiting the cafe with the Devonshire teas! I didn't add any new birds to my list but I was amazed to see 3 penguin road kills far from the beach. One was on the third level of houses, about 500 metres from the beach, and another was on the cliff top above Christmas Cove.

My bird list for the island amounted to 79 species, a fraction of the recorded species. For me the special sightings were the Glossy Black Cockatoos, the Hooded Plovers, the Osprey, the trio of Kestrels soaring below us at Mt Thisby, the pair of Wedgetails nearby, the Blackfaced Shags, which I'd only seen once before, the Reef Herons, the Penguins, the Cape Barren Geese, the Oyster-catchers, which are always favourites of mine, the Brown Currawongs and the huge number of White-faced Herons around Kingscote and Emu Bay.

On the way back on the ferry next day we saw, and video'd, a juvenile Black-browed Albatross. It was nearer the mainland when we saw it, but it came from the direction of K.I.!

The total list for the fortnight was 112 species, and included a flock of about 40 Red-necked Avocets, swimming and feeding heads down and tails up near the Murray Mouth at Goolwa. As usual, there were lots of birds heard and not seen, and there were quite a number seen and not identified.

You will probably have noted that I made no mention of visiting Flinders Chase, or Remarkable Rocks, or Vivonne Bay or Parndana. We'll go there next time!

Rita Mills.

MT ARAPILES CAMPOUT

The annual meeting of the Western Victoria Field Naturalists Clubs Association will be held at Mt Arapiles on 16th October, 1993.

NATURAL FEATURES of the Mt Arapiles area include

Mt Arapiles. 369 m high, 1500 hA. It is one of three separate areas of land making up the Mt Arapiles -, Tooan State Park. Mt Arapiles is a northern outlier of the Grampians. It has 500 plant species, including 29 significant species, and many birds, including the Peregrine Falcon, which breeds on the rocks.

Mitre Rock, a spectacular small outcrop comprises the second block of the park, on the opposite side of the Horsham-Goroke Road.

The Tooan Block, 3550 hA, 5 km west of the Mount, is the third section, comprising low eucalypt forest on clay flats and mallee bushland on sandy rises. A good birding area.

St Mary's Lake Wildlife Reserve joins the Tooan Block. A large freshwater red gum lake which usually carries many waterfowl.

Lakes and Swamps. There are many other freshwater and saline lakes and swamps in the general area, many of them designated wildlife reserves. Many have rare or unusual plants, and collectively are one of the most important areas in Victoria for waterfowl, especially waders. Numerous individual wetlands support very large numbers of a particular species when conditions are good e.g. 15000 to 20000 Banded Stilts have been recorded several times, and 5000 to 8000 Shelduck.

THE CAMPOUT SITE will be a bush camp at Mt Arapiles, with no formalised sites. Charges are \$1.00 per person per night, children under 8 free. Pay at self-serve permit dispenser at Centenary Park camp area. Access is from the Wimmera Highway (Horsham-Edenhope Rd) or Horsham-Goroke Rd. Mt Arapiles is 35 km west of Horsham and 10 km west of Natimuk. Facilities include flush toilets and washbasins (cold water only), shelter shed, barbecue, fireplaces, some tables and seats, water supply (limited, so no showers), and information board.

Other accommodation is available at Natimuk Hotel, Natimuk Lake Caravan Park, and at Horsham.

THE PROGRAM

Frid 15 October

7.30 pm. Peter Hawker (Ranger in Charge of Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park)
"The Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park". Illustrated.

Sat 16 October

9.30 am. Choice of three activities.

1. Mt Arapiles walk with the Ranger. Wildflowers and birds.
2. Birds and vegetation of the Tooan Block and St Mary's Lake.
Leader: Rod Sutherland. 5 km drive, then walk.
3. Saline and freshwater lakes and swamps. Plants and birds.
50 km drive with about 6 stops with a short walk.
Gumboots may be desirable if the weather is wet.

12.00 Lunch at Mt Arapiles campsite.

1.30 pm. Above three activities repeated.

6.00 pm. Dinner (catered). Location Natimuk. Either hall or showgrounds, depending on the caterers. To be advised.

6.45 pm. Annual general meeting. Guest speaker to be advised.

Sunday 17 October

9.30 pm. Little Desert National Park (southern boundary, Cooack).
Wildflower walk with rangers. (Other additional activities may also be available.)

12.00 Barbecue luncheon at Mt Arapiles camp ground. Lunch to be provided and cooked. This will conclude the campout.

REGISTRATION closes on Sept 29th, 1993. Earlier booking appreciated.
Bookings to Mr George Cornwall, Secretary, Horsham Field Naturalists Club inc, 47 Federation Avenue, Horsham Vic 3400. Phone 053 82 2343.

Saturday night dinner + 2 suppers (Fri & Sat night)	\$20.00
Sunday BBQ lunch (bring your own tea, coffee)	\$ 5.00
Campout registration fee (per person)	\$ 2.00

Please indicate the number of people likely to camp in the park.

OBSERVATIONS

BOOBOOK OWLS are still in the botanic gardens. (SP)

CONTROL THOSE SNAILS. A Straw-neck Ibis was observed in the garden (at Harcourt), eating snails. The snails were being swallowed whole. (BE)

SILVEREYES have been demolishing cotoneaster berries. (KT & GB)

LEFT-FOOTED COCKATOOS. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos are said to hold food with the left foot - in contrast with other parrots - where right foot is used. Observation is needed.

SANDON IN JUNE 1993

Birds seen at the bird bath were

Scarlet Robin	Weebill	White-eared Honeyeater
Grey Shrike-thrush (pair)	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Fuscous Honeyeater
Grey Fantail	Striated Thornbill	White-plumed Honeyeater
Wrens	White-throated Treecreeper	Brown-headed Honeyeater
Speckled Warbler	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	White-naped Honeyeater

Birds seen on the property were

White-faced Heron	Welcome Swallows	Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Spotted Pardalotes
Pacific Black Duck	Hooded Robin (pair)	Striated Pardalotes
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Yellow Robin	Silvereyes
Brown Falcon	Golden Whistler (imm + pr)	Red-browed Firetail
Masked Lapwings (pair)	Willie Wagtail	Diamond Firetail
Galahs	Brown Thornbill	White-winged Choughs (pr)
Crimson Rosellas	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Magpies
Eastern Rosellas	Southern Whiteface	Grey Currawongs (pr)
Owlet Nightjar	Varied Sittellas	Australian Ravens
Kookaburra	Red Wattlebirds	

Susanna Starr

PROPOSED NATURAL HISTORY STUDY CAMP

The camp is proposed for the 9-day period from Friday evening 7th October to Sunday afternoon 16th October, 1994, at the Department of Sport and Recreation Camp at Anglesea. Full accommodation would cost about \$200. Provided minimum numbers were maintained, arrangements could be made for part time attendance. The camp holds 93 people maximum, with a minimum of 40 (weekdays) and 50 (weekends). A firm booking of the camp by VFNCA would be needed by October 1993, with deposit of \$500 total. It is suggested that this be raised from a levy of \$25 per club.

The aim of the camp would be to provide absorbing opportunities of learning via lectures, laboratory and workshop sessions, discussion, field excursions etc. The program will be designed for those Naturalists desiring to get involved in deeper study and understanding of various aspects of Natural History and associated skills, as well as for the beginning Field Naturalist.

As the proposed guest speakers and lecturers are members or supporters It has the potential to be an innovative and exciting event, and deserving of support. The camp will be under the auspices of the Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association. Geelong F.N.C. will act as treasurer and mail receiver.

We need to provide the following information by 31 August, 1993.

Subject	Number of participants		
	Very interested	Interested	Not interested
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Flowering plant ident.			
Geological aspects			
Birds (general)			
Birds (wetland)			
Reptiles and amphibians			
Insects and spiders			
Climate			
Mammals			
Ecology			
Freshwater life			
Koori history and culture			
Mosses liverworts & ferns			
Collecting & preservation			
Microscopy			
Seashore life			
Other suggestions			
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Number attending			-----
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FROGWATCH

WHAT IS FROGWATCH?

Frogwatch is a community action project which involves people looking for and listening for frogs, and is a major response to the concerns raised by biologists that frogs are in world-wide decline. The project is intended to be a systematic survey of frogs, their habitats and the factors that effect their survival. By studying frogs we can obtain a clearer picture on how healthy our land and water are.

WHY MONITOR FROGS

Over the last 10 years up to one third of Victoria's frog species have experienced serious decline in numbers and distribution. Obvious habitat destruction and modification can be identified as direct causes for decline. Factors such as introduction of exotic plants and animals, pesticide and fertilizer use, draining of wetlands, and other land use changes, have all been identified as direct causes of changes to frog populations. The decline of frogs, even in protected areas such as National parks, indicates that more subtle effects are also involved.

Some frogs live only in water, some on land, while others live only in trees, but most rely on direct contact with water for breeding. Their skin is highly sensitive to the environment, and as a result, they are susceptible to changes in water and soil. Thus frogs are exposed to the

environment in more direct ways than most other animals, and by monitoring frogs we are also monitoring the environment.

WHO CAN BE INVOLVED?

Frogwatch can involve everyone. School children, landholders, field naturalists, and community members, will be surveying and monitoring frogs all across Victoria. This will be done mainly by listening to the sounds frogs make, and checking against the tape of Victorian Frogs you will be able to identify species in your locality. Also, frogwatching can be done at any location where you are likely to find frogs. In fact, the project is mobile enough for you to take wherever you go.

HOW CAN I BE A FROGWATCHER?

- complete the registration form and order kit components by prepaid mail. Cost of a kit is \$25 (individual) or \$75 (group).
- investigate your local area for frog habitats, or
- wait for your kit to find out how to find frogs.
- learn to identify frogs with the Frogwatch Field Guide to Victorian Frogs and Calls of Victorian Frogs (audio cassette).
- use the survey form to record your observations.
- read the newsletter for interesting articles.
- join or form "Frogwatch Action Groups" to restore habitats.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION?

Information from frogwatchers will go onto a database to produce distribution maps of frogs across Victoria. Over time this mapped information will show changes in frog numbers. Frogwatchers will be able to compare their results with those from around the state as frog reports will be presented in a quarterly newsletter. By examining land and water use we can determine existing and potential threats to frogs. Once data has been objectively analysed, we can develop the best strategy for saving and restoring high value habitats.

For a copy of the application form, or sample survey forms, contact E. Perkins. Frogwatch address is Frogwatch, Dept of Conservation and Natural Resources, (Reply Paid 35), P.O. Box 41, East Melbourne 3002.

BACK ISSUES OF "AUSTRALIAN PLANTS"

Do you have issue 2 or 3 of "Australian Plants". They are needed to complete sets.

Subscriptions 1993 Subscriptions were due in February.

Single \$12, Family \$18, Student/pensioner \$8, Supporting member \$20
Newsletter posted: subscription plus \$6.

Committee: B Maund (Pres), B Envall (VP), M Oliver (Sec), G Broadway (Treas), K Turner (Prog), R Mills (PO & asst N/L), E. Perkins (N/L ed), S Parnaby, C Morris and K Meehan.

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. PROGRAM

Excursions leave promptly at the times indicated.

Fri Aug 13. ISLANDS - how the animals and plants got there. J and M. CALDER. 8.00 pm at High School.

Aug 13-15 BARMAH CAMPOUT. Meeting of WVFNCA at Dharya Centre, Barmah. Copies of booking/information sheets can be obtained from E Perkins.

Sat 14 Aug. MALMSBURY RESERVOIRS. Kath Meehan will be the guide. Meet SEC, Mostyn St at 1.30, or Malmsbury Town lake (behind the public hall) at 2.00 pm.

Thurs 19 Aug. BIRDWATCHING. Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed carpark at 9.30 am. Leader E. Perkins.

Thurs 26 Aug. BUSINESS MEETING. 7.30 pm at 38 Campbell St.

Fri 10 Sept. FIRE MANAGEMENT Talk by Mr Les Vearing. High School at 8 pm

Sat 11 Sept. BOCA bus trip to Maldon.

Thurs 16 Sept. BIRDWATCHING. Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont. Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader G. Broadway.

Fri 8 Oct. PAT BINGHAM "BIRD HABITAT - HOW YOU KNOW YOU HAVE GOT IT". High School at 8.00 pm.

Sat 9 Oct. FERNIHURST via Bear's lagoon. Leader C Morris. Leave 27 Doveton St at 9.00 am.

Sun 17 Oct. TARNAGULLA WILDFLOWERS. Excursion with Maryborough FNC. All day trip. Take lunch.

Fri 12 Nov. ROB WATKINS "NATURAL HISTORY IN THE EYES OF A PHOTOGRAPHER" High School at 8.00 pm.

Sat 13 Nov. TERRICK TERRICK. Leave 27 Doveton St at 9.30 am.

Sat 11 Dec. TRENTHAM all day excursion. Leader S. Bruton.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club inc. P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine 3450.

Meetings: Second Friday of each month (Jan excepted) at Castlemaine High School at 8.00 p.m. Business meetings on the fourth Thursday (Dec excepted) at 7.30 p.m. All members are invited to attend.