

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

February 1993

#186 Vol 17.1

SANDON IN NOVEMBER 1992.



Birds seen at the bird bath were

Crimson rosellas	Wrens	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Grey Shrike-thrush (pair N in shed in south area)	Brown Thornbills	Magpies
Grey Fantail	Striated Thornbills	Grey Currawong
	Wh-thr'd Treecreeper (pr)	

Birds seen on the property were

Australasian Grebe (N pair)	Shining Bronze Cuckoo	Buff-rumped Thornbill
White-faced Heron	Southern Boobook Owl (h)	Yellow-rumped Thornbill (N)
Pacific Black Duck	Kookaburra (pair)	Red Wattlebirds
Maned Duck (pair)	Welcome Swallow (pair)	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
Little Eagle	Richard's Pipit	White-plumed Honeyeater
Brown Falcon (pair)	Bl-faced Cuckoo-shrike (pr)	Brown-headed Honeyeater
Masked Lapwing (pr, aband- oned nest 13/11/92)	Scarlet Robin (pair)	Spotted Pardalote (pair)
Galah (pair)	Hooded Robin (pair)	Striated Pardalote
Long-billed Corella (pair)	Jacky Winter	European Goldfinch
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (pr)	Rufous Whistler (pair)	Olive Backed Oriole
Eastern Rosella (pair)	Willie Wagtail	White-winged Choughs (N)
Pallid Cuckoo	Rufous Songlark (pr, a first for me)	Dusky Woodswallow
Fantailed Cuckoo	Speckled Warbler (pair)	Australian Raven
Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo	Weebills	

OCT LIST: Add Red Wattlebird

Susanna Starr

ALBANY, AND HOMEWARD BOUND

The first three days in Albany were spent washing and shopping, visiting antique shops and the very well set out museum and the "Amity", visiting the Bird Walk which was flooded and overgrown and a disappointment - the only real one for the trip, though - admiring the views from Mt Melville, visiting the restored Forts' area, which is a credit to those responsible, and taking the Nature Walk near the Forts, which was 1½ hours of pure enjoyment. Many flowers were out including dryandras and lots more peas, such as the Tree Hovea, which I love. There were some beautiful views over the town, Emu Point and the Sound, but there weren't many birds seen other than New Holland Honeyeaters!

The fourth day was the highlight of our stay at Albany. We went out to Two People's Bay in the hope of at least hearing a Noisy Scrub Bird. We were really much too late - we should have been out there at dawn - but the ranger directed me to where I would have a chance of hearing one in the nearby Little Bay, but first we decided to walk the nature trail, where two months before our chances of hearing the bird would have been good. Where it had gone to, or if it was still alive, the Ranger didn't know. The trail wasn't a particularly long one, but there was lots to see and some lovely views across the bay and across to the Western Barrens.

When we got back to the car I set out to find the guide booklet I'd lost on the first part of the walk, and down the path towards me came a Brown Bandicoot all unconcerned. He stopped about six feet from me, whiffled his nose and peered at me, detoured around me and back on to the path again, going on with his own business.

We then drove down to Little Bay and spent some time there exploring the hillside, but we heard nothing but the wind and the distant sound of the sea. There were lots of flowers there, and a few new to me.

As it was just on 12 o'clock we decided to go back to the barbecues at Two People's Bay for lunch. Doug promptly took off up the path with the video camera in the hope of seeing the bandicoot. I wandered out onto the beach for a few minutes, and as I approached the car another bandicoot appeared, edging around the reeds. What we didn't realise then, was that she, like a family of three magpies, had gate-crashed our lunch. At this stage another group of picnickers arrived, which was just as well - we were able to share the visitors out a bit! These four gave us quite a laugh. They were obviously old hands at scrounging, and Dad Magpie I didn't trust, so I stood over our stale bread sandwiches which I was toasting on the barbecue, but despite that, he hopped up in front of me, cocked an eye at me and swiped the top piece of bread from my sandwich. He flew off about 15 feet away and started on it. Baby Magpie cah-cahed for some, but was ignored, so it tried to steal a piece, was attacked, and rolled over on its side, still eying the piece of bread. Dad attacked again so it just rolled over on to its back, and watched for an opportunity from there. Meanwhile, the bandicoot decided to try her luck while Dad was otherwise occupied (Mum meanwhile had joined the other picnickers, and was being spoilt rotten) but he rounded on her and she darted for cover. The pantomime with the young maggie was repeated, but the bandicoot after the first dive for cover merely dodged, and though Dad Magpie always aimed for her eyes she never came to more harm than losing a tuft of fur. A slide which I took at the time shows that her face was 6 inches away from his beak, so her reactions were certainly very fast.

Between the three of them where wasn't much of my piece of bread left. Doug had the video camera with him, but of course, the battery was flat, and we got almost nothing on tape of all the fun.

After lunch we went back to Little Bay and I went up the hillside on my own, and over to a steep gully, but still nothing. After this we decided to take the track off the road on the way back that the Ranger had recommended. He said we might see Rock Parrots and even Elegant Parrots, both of which we did see briefly, the former right at the cliff-tops, and the latter further inland. The flowers we saw on this walk included Pink Fairy orchids, a brilliant pink Pimelea, and a Banksia growing right on the cliff top that seemed to have deep-red flowers with bronzy tips - a beauty. There was also a very attractive silvery-leaved grevillea. The flowers weren't very showy, but the plant with its narrow hairy leaved looked like a conifer from a distance.

We set out for Hopetoun and Fitzgerald River National Park next day, via Jeramungup and Ravensthorpe. As we drew level with the eastern Stirlings which we could see on the horizon, we came into another beautiful flower area. Here we saw a Corky Myrtle, the flowers of which hugged the main stem, and a patch of Tetratheca under a clump of mallee. We stopped at Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show for a while, which gave me a chance to identify a few things I had seen, and we also saw a Quallup Bell (a very showy Darwinia) there, and learnt that we should see it at the Fitzgerald National Park. We settled down into the Hopetoun Caravan park that night and went out to the National Park next morning in drizzling rain. Nevertheless, the sight of East Mt Barren, which was burnt along with quite a large area of the park 2 or 3 years ago, Quallup Bells in colours from pale yellow to deep red, Royal Hakeas in fruit near Ranger Station, a beautiful red and yellow prostrate Grevillea, Dampieras, a lovely, delicate mauve Hibiscus, glorious ocean views, and sighting of a Western Bristle Bird made it all worth while. I'd love to go back when the Park has recovered a bit more, but it really because the area was still very open that I was able to see so much.

We drove on to Esperance that day, booked in for two nights, going to Cape le Grand National Park next day despite the threat of rain. We walked again from Thistle Cove to Lucky Bay. This time we walked right down to the camping and picnic ground. We decided to walk back via the main road because the rain had set in. The camping ground is in a lovely bay with white sand and turquoise water, lots of plants and birds, and an over-friendly population of Western Grey Kangaroos, which will even take the food off tables. One woman told me of an experience she had of one scooping her picnic basket off the table with its forepaws. Highlights of our day were the Swamp Harrier near the entrance to the park, a mass of pink Calothamnus and pink Pimelea, the sun behind Frenchman's Peak, showing the cave that goes right through under the summit, and Dancing Spider Orchid on the walk.

On the way home we stayed another night at Newman's Rocks, but in a different spot. This time we discovered a rock pool with huge tadpoles, and Doug found a tiny frog about the same size. I doubt if the frog and tadpole were related!

The highlight of the overnight stop at Eucla was the flight of about 30 Major Mitchell Cockatoos which swept over the motel while we were having our breakfast. I remarked on them to the waitress, whose only comment was that they were "half an hour late this morning"! We went down to old Eucla before heading for Ceduna and found little changed from eight years ago, except that the lone eucalypt now has a smaller companion, and there is a family of Australian Ravens nesting in the old tree.

We stayed for two nights in Ceduna, visiting the Laura Bay Conservation Park. It is a very interesting area with quite a variety of succulents including pigfaces and iceplants. Because of the low vegetation it is another area which gives the impression of being far bigger than it really is, and the 3 or 4 mile walk we set out on proved to be only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 miles, and the 50 foot cliffs about 20! It was also an outstanding bird area, especially in the trees and shrubs behind the dunes.

Next night we stayed at Port Augusta and then headed off to Adelaide for a few days, calling in at Port Germain, a few miles south of Port Augusta. We found ourselves in a fascinating small town on the edge of a shallow bay of the gulf. It has a two km jetty which was left high and dry twice a day at low tide. We walked half way along it to photograph a tractor with boat-trailer parked in the water. It is another place I would like to go back to. It would make a great base for visiting the Southern Flinders which form a backdrop to the township.

To do all the things I'd like to do we'd need to retire, inherit a fortune, buy a very comfortable campervan and go touring. Ah, dreams.

Rita Mills.

SANDON IN DECEMBER 1992

Birds seen at the bird bath were

Crimson rosellas	Brown Thornbills	Silvereyes (pr N in Stone
Grey Fantail	Striated Thornbills	Pine on 29th; newly-
Wrens	Magpies	hatched nestlings gone)

Birds seen on the property were

Australasian Grebe (N pair in Cumbungi; 5 young))	Eastern Rosella (pair)	Rufous Whistler (pair)
White-faced Heron (pr)	Pallid Cuckoo	Grey Shrike-thrush (pr N stone pine - abandoned)
Pacific Black Duck (pr)	Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo	Willie Wagtail (pair)
Maned Duck (9)	Shining Bronze Cuckoo	Rufous Songlark
Little Eagle (pair)	Kookaburra (pair)	Buff-rumped Thornbill
Brown Falcon	Welcome Swallow (pair)	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Masked Lapwing (pr)	Richard's Pipit (pair)	Wh-throated Treecreeper
Black-fronted Plover	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Galah (pair)	Scarlet Robin	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
Long-billed Corella (pair)	Hooded Robin (pr n near peach tree - abandoned)	White-plumed Honeyeater

Mistletoe Bird (pr, collecting down from quinces for 2 weeks)	European Goldfinch (pr nesting in apple tree, family raised, left nest 15/12)	White-winged Choughs Grey Currawong Australian Raven
Striated Pardalote	Olive-backed Oriole	Susanna Starr.
Spotted pardalote		

OBSERVATIONS

MT CONSULTATION BIRDS seen in early December included Leaden Flycatcher, Whiteface, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-winged Triller (displaying), Fuscous Honeyeater, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Grey Thrush, Willie Wagtail (nesting), Dusky Woodswallow (nesting), Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Eastern Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot and Musk Lorikeet. (KMCK and GB)

KINGFISHERS - raised a pair last year at Maldon, but the nest collapsed, and the young probably succumbed to predators. (GS)

AUTUMN LILY (*Tricoryne elatior*) is flowering abundantly. Usually flowers after Christmas.

SPOTLESS CRAKE? was seen crossing the drive to a farm. The bird did not match any in the bird book and so was probably immature. (SB)

KALIMNA BONFIRE AREA has lots of young trees. (GE)

DOWNY BURSARIA (*Bursaria lasiophylla*) was found flowering in Smith's Reef Forest on 6 Jan. A new locality record. (EP)

IMMATURE EASTERN ROSELLAS have been seen on a red-hot poker (SP)

YOUNG GALAH has been fed on wattle seeds. The head of a plantain and flowers of flat-weeds are also favoured food items (RM)

LORIKKETS have appeared to be particularly abundant this year. Flocks of many hundreds have been roosting in a tree in Greenhill Avenue. (KT)

OTHER OBSERVATIONS (All for early December unless otherwise indicated).

TORTOISE- on Jennings Hill Road, 2/12/93 (EP)

RABBIT - seen in Saint Street. (EP)

ECHIDNA - seen at Sandon (BW).

BABY GREBE - on a dam at Sandon. (SS)

MISTLETOE BIRDS - pair at sandon pecking at the down on baby quinces. (SS)

MUSK LORIKEETS - abundant along Forest Creek. (LP)

MUSK LORIKEETS - very noisy at Chewton. (CM)

WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATERS - seen chasing Red Wattlebirds. (IP)

FAIRY MARTINS - 34 sitting on a fence, Reid's Lane, Dec 16th. (EP)

RAINBOW BIRD - Tarrengower School Road on Dec 16th. One bird. (EP)

RAINBOW BIRDS - arrived a week early at Maldon this year. (GS)

RAINBOW BIRDS - seen near Gold Course (GB)

BLACK-TAILED NATIVE HENS - 2 at Bell's Swamp on 16-17 Dec. (EP)
PINK-EARED DUCK - pair on Bell's Swamp, 17 Dec. (CFNC outing)
BROWN GOSHAWK - a pair at Nth Castlemaine has raised two young. (RM, Jan)
BROWN GOSHAWK - overhead in town area, 2 Jan. (EP)
YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOOS - 5 birds were seen at Trentham. (SB)
WATSONIA - there is a dense patch in Blakeleys Road (north end).

THE TIMBOON CAMPOUT

The program for the combined campout of the Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association and the Western Victoria Field Naturalists Clubs Association will be held on the weekend of March 6,7,8.

The location is Kangarooie, at Princetown

Fri 7.30 pm. **Welcome.** Slides of Coastal area.

Sat 9.00 am. **Bus trip;** explore the Shipwreck Coast, or
Scenic walk along old railway line, Timboon.
noon **Meet** Port Campbell for lunch
1.30 pm. **Great Ocean Rd;** explore Loch Ard Gorge and Sherbrook R.
4.00 pm. **Return to Kangarooie** for evening meal (5.30 pm) and
meeting (6.30 pm).
8.00 pm. **Dr John Sherwood "Rivers and Streams of the Otways"**

Sun 9.30 am. **Otways;** bushwalks, bird watching. Return at 4.00 pm.
5.30 pm. **Evening meal**
8.00 pm. **Glow Worms** - meet ranger at Melba Gully or
View Mutton Birds.

Mon Morning **Bird watching** - Princetown Swamp and walk to mouth of
the Gellibrand River
12.00 **Lunch** at Kangarooie
2.00 pm **Farewell.**

Kangarooie is a well equipped hostel with bunk-style accommodation. Doonas and pillows are supplied. Conducted by Timboon F.N.C. Cost is \$75 which includes accommodation for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights and all meals from Saturday breakfast to Monday lunch. Previous campouts have hired a bus. Cost would be \$7-8 per day if the bus is filled. Book by 5th February, 1993, to Timboon F.N.C., c/ Mrs Nancy Bryant, RMB Curdie Vale Road, Timboon 3268. Payment to accompany booking. Indicate if you wish to use the bus. Map can be obtained from E. Perkins.

FROM THE COMMITTEE

SUBSCRIPTIONS 1993 The committee recommends that they remain unchanged i.e. Single \$12; Family \$18; Student/pensioner \$8; Supporting member \$20. Newsletter posted: subscription plus \$6

SPIDERS COMMONLY FOUND IN MELBOURNE AND SURROUNDING REGIONS. 20 spiders are described; 64 pages, 16 colour illustrations, 20 b/w illustrations, by Ken Walker and Graham Millege, published by Royal Society of Vic. Cost is \$9.75, or in bulk; 5-10 copies, \$8.45; 11-20 copies, \$7.50; over 20 copies, \$6.00. Orders will be taken at the meeting.

PROPOSED STATE GOVERNMENT RURAL GOVERNMENT POLICY. In a press release, the Minister stated that the Government had decided not to proceed with Amendment S25. A new amendment, which will draw on public responses to amendment S25, will be introduced. A workshop report to this is available from the Secretary.

ADDITIONS TO THE PLANT LIST

Over a dozen plants have been added to the Club's plant list recently..

SMALL MONKEY FLOWER *Mimulus prostratus*

Small Monkey-flower was found growing at Bell's Swamp on 17 December. It is a small, prostrate plant with small, long-stalked blue flowers and small oval leaves. This is a new record for the Castlemaine Plant List. Creeping Monkey-flower (*M. repens*) has been a Bell's Swamp record since edition 1 of the plant list, but I do not recall seeing it there. It may have been recorded erroneously, and so this latter plant has been removed from as a Bell's Swamp record. Small Monkey-flower differs from Creeping Monkey-flower in that it is finely hairy, the flower stalks are longer than the leaves, and it does not root at the leaf nodes. Both of the Monkey Flowers favour a damp location, like that at Bell's Swamp.

SCRAPER RUSH *Juncus radula*

Scraper Rush was found growing in a roadside soak in Almond Tree Lane, north of Maldon. Scraper Rush is generally similar in appearance to the locally widespread *Juncus sp "A"*, in that the individual flowers are widely separated. The main differences between the two are

<i>J. radula</i>	Pith continuous	Stems bright green	Flower stalks rough
<i>J. sp "A"</i>	Pith with air spaces	Stems bluish green	Flower stalks smooth

The name "Scraper Rush" refers to the roughness of the flower stalks and upper stems - rather like fine sandpaper. Scraper Rush is fairly common in the northern parts of Victoria. E. Perkins.

To be continued

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.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club inc. PO Box 324, Castlemaine 3450.

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. PROGRAM

Fri 12 Feb. WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MEANDER with Rita Mills. 8.00 pm at Lawson Hall, Castlemaine High School. This is the annual meeting.

Sat 13 Feb. TULLAROOP RESERVOIR. Depending on weather, leave SEC, Mostyn St at 1.30 pm or 3.30 pm. If the latter, take tea. Meeting time to be arranged at the meeting. Leader: K Turner. Bird watching.

Thurs 18 Feb. BIRDWATCHING. Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader: M Oliver.

SAT 27 Feb. DAWN BIRDWATCH. Meet 15 Gaulton St, 45 minutes before sunrise. Leader: M Oliver.

Sat 6 - Mon 8 March. TIMBOON CAMPOUT. See page 6 for details.

Fri 12 Mar. CAPE YORK. Talk by Chris Morris. 8.00 pm, at High School.

Sat 13 Mar. TIPPERARY SPRINGS. Bird watching and walking in the Tipperary Springs area. Leaders R Mills/C Morris. 1.30 from SEC, Mostyn Street.

Thurs 18 Mar. BIRDWATCHING. Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader: C Morris.

Fri 9 April. NO MEETING (Good Friday)

Sat 10 April. GAASH RD and HARCOURT NTH RESERVOIR. Birds and mistletoes. Leader: E. Perkins. Meet SEC, Mostyn St at 1.30 pm.

Thurs 15 April. BIRDWATCHING. Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader: K Turner.

Sat 15 May. TERRICK TERRICK. All day excursion. Meet 45 Doveton St at 10.00 am. Leader: E Perkins or C Morris.

Thurs 20 May. BIRDWATCHING. Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader: E. Perkins.

Excursions leave promptly at the times indicated.

COMMITTEE:

President: B Maund V. Pres: G Broadway and B Envall
Secretary: M Oliver Newsl: R Mills (ed), E. Perkins (asst ed)
Treasurer: G Broadway Programs: K Turner
Pub Offic: R Mills
Committee: C & C Norwood, S Parnaby, B Perry and C Morris