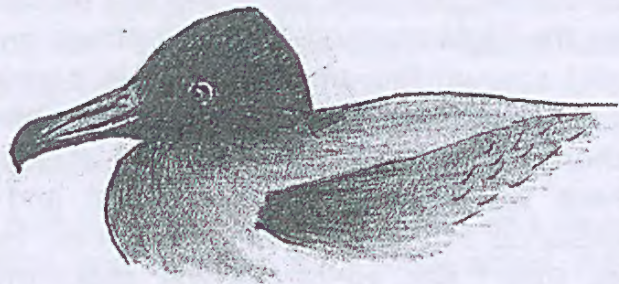


# Castlemaine Naturalist

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Light-mantled Sooty Albatross

## The Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand – Nigel Harland

It was only to the Subantarctic, not Antarctica; it was only from New Zealand, not South America; but it was a trip the like of which I will never experience again. I had never seen a penguin before, except for Little Penguins on Phillip Island, so the thought of seeing seven different types on the same trip had much appeal. Apart from travelling mainly in New Zealand waters, the trip spent two days on Macquarie Island – Australian territory – and possibly 15 new Australian ticks! So I asked Anne if she would like to go and she said no very emphatically! No amount of persuasion on my part could change that decision, so I reluctantly decided to go alone.

The Spirit of Enderby left Bluff, on the South Island of New Zealand in mid November. The ship had a Russian crew and room for about 40 passengers. The cabins were small but comfortable and we were looked after very well indeed. Travelling south in very benign seas, we arrived at the Enderby Islands on the next day. Landings on the Islands are not permitted, so we explored the sheltered bays in zodiacs. There were thousands of birds, the highlight being the endemic Snares Penguins, standing on rock platforms surrounded by yellow kelp. Fernbirds and Tomtits were also new birds for me. The next stretch, to the Auckland Islands was very long and by the time we reached Enderby Island, the northernmost island of the Auckland Island group we were able to get ashore for the first time. Views of the Subantarctic Snipe were quickly followed by Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Yellow-eyed Penguins and the endemic Auckland Island Shag. The Red-crowned Parakeets were quite obliging, feeding within a few meters of us and the walk around the island was quite a novelty after several days at sea. Next morning we were moored in Carnley Harbour, where we landed and walked to a spot where New Zealand coast-watchers spent a year or two during the second world war looking for enemy action – seems a very unlikely place for it to occur!

We then set off on the two-day voyage to Macquarie Island. The wind reached gale force 9 and the seas rose to 7 meters. The seasickness medication I had found worked wonders and even though I was confined to bed – walking around the ship was almost impossible. I spent the time productively, learning how to use my new digital camera! When we were within 200 nautical miles of Macquarie Island, the call went out that we were in Australian waters. The Americans on board – perhaps half of the group – wondered what this meant, but

the Australian "listers" were the first on the bridge! The first Australian bird I saw was the Light-mantled Sooty Albatross and I still think it was the most attractive bird I saw on the whole trip. It is a small Albatross, with delightful colouring. More Albatrosses, Petrels, Prions and Storm Petrels were added before we went ashore on Sandy Bay to a myriad of penguins and seals. The main penguins where we landed were the Royal and King Penguins, there were literally thousands of them, all very inquisitive, having no fear of the human intruders. The time I had spent learning about my camera paid huge dividends, but I eventually had to tell myself that I would never be here again, so I put my camera away and sat down to take in a spectacle that I am unlikely ever to see again. I think I will review the images in my mind long after I have last looked at my photographs. The King Penguins are the largest, reaching nearly a meter tall and you can sit quietly and they will approach within that distance – an experience that will last a lifetime. The young were just as big, but shaggy brown and just as inquisitive. Further along the beach the Royal Penguins, with flashy yellow crests started to appear in larger numbers. They are slightly smaller and a tad more timid. Elephant seals loafed among them and there was always a bit of space between the seals and the penguins. As we boarded the zodiacs to return to the ship, two elegant Antarctic Tern bid us farewell.

The next day we headed towards the Australian research base at Buckles Bay. The swell was too high for the zodiacs to land so we spent an hour circling the top of the island to find calmer seas. It was always possible that a landing would not be possible and the hour it took was very tense, but the outcome positive. We were escorted around the base by local staff and learned much of the history of the island. The days when penguins and seals were slaughtered are long gone, but much of the equipment used is still in evidence. The base is quite large and there are perhaps 50 people staying there at a time. The scones with jam and cream were quite a highlight of the visit. After looking at the Gentoo and Rockhopper Penguins of which there were a lot less than the King and Royals of the previous day, we had a look for the Common Redpoll – an introduced bird which is found nowhere else in Australia. I was lucky enough to find three immature birds, but by the time the others arrived (too many scones!), they had flown, never to be seen again. A colony of Macquarie Island Shags were seen on the zodiac trip back to the boat together with a much closer view of Rockhopper Penguins.

On reflection, the Macquarie Island experience was the highlight of the trip. We saw more birds than expected (17 for my Australian list); the penguins were unbelievable. We learned a lot about the history and saw many relics from the past. We also met people who lived there for long periods. The only negative was the fact that rabbits still exist on the island in large numbers and they are evident from the state of much of the vegetation.

The Spirit of Enderby sailed Eastwards and arrived next day at the Campbell Islands. We went ashore for a walk across the island. It was raining hard and the uphill walk to the other side of the island was difficult. Birds were few and far between until there were suddenly a number of pairs of Wandering Albatross bonding at their nests. We had seen quite a number of Wandering Albatross from the ship, but to see them at close quarters was a remarkable experience.

Firstly the sheer size of them and then the pair bonding which occurs just prior to mating. Again I sat down in the pouring rain and watched them – mystified. Clothing is an important preparation for a trip of this nature. It rained most of the time and temperatures were around 2 or 3 degrees. Waterproof and warm clothing was a must and I was extremely grateful for it on days like this one.

We had been at sea for 9 days – about half of the trip and I decided it was time for a Bird Free Day, so I spent it reading and learning a lot more about the camera – I got to page 72, nearly half way through! I am a very keen birdwatcher, but it does get a bit too much at times so this was a wise decision, not totally understood by others.

Next stop was the Antipodes where we found Rockhopper and Erect Crested Penguins and an Antipodean Parakeet. No possibility of a landing so we headed on to the Bounty Islands. The sea was very rough there, so the possibility of a zodiac trip was sensibly cancelled. The number of birds on the islands was tremendous and as an alternative to going to the islands, the crew berleyed off the back of the ship. In no time at all, there were thousands of Salvin's Albatross competing for the food. The time I had spent learning how to use the camera again came to the fore and I have lots of pictures as well as memories.

Then off on a long leg to the Chatham Islands. It was at this stage that I wished it was all over, we had been on a ship for over two weeks and while the birding had been terrific, the time it took to get from one place to another seemed to get longer. Two days later we arrived at the Chatham Islands and moored near South West Island for a zodiac cruise. The Shore Plover is one of the rarest birds in the world and we managed to find quite a few – it is similar in size and activity to the Black-fronted Plover. We also managed to get a good view of the Chatham Island Oystercatcher. The Black Robin is found on this island, but we had no chance of seeing one from the zodiac – a pity since it has been rescued from the point of extinction over the past 20 years or so. Another day at sea before arriving at Waitangi – a place where people actually live! To find people and to see houses and cars was a novelty. We saw Weka, Chatham Island Pigeon and Chatham Island Gerygone before the very last zodiac trip back to the ship and the trip back to Dunedin.

A potentially boring last day was enlivened by the sighting of quite a number of icebergs. Whilst there were no penguins on them, the sight of the huge structures floating in unfamiliar waters was something we had not expected. It filled in a relatively bird free day. We landed at Dunedin ahead of schedule and bid farewell to the Spirit of Enderby. Our total bird list was just over 100, most of which were new for me. It is a trip I would never recommend to anyone else. You have to make up your own mind to do something like this. But I would not have missed it for the world, it was a unique experience that I will never forget.

**NOTE: Change of programme –**

**February AGM.** Camel Trek in Central Australia. Geraldine Harris.

**March.** Mount Alexander Sustainability Group. Dean Bridgefoot.

## Coral Sea Pelagic Trip - 11-20<sup>th</sup> December 2006

Chris Morris was a member of the team that made this journey during mid December 2006. The following report is an abbreviated version of the report produced on a website by Simon Mustoe, Applied Ecology Solutions Pty Ltd. The full report is available on [www.ecology-solutions.com.au/coral\\_sea](http://www.ecology-solutions.com.au/coral_sea)

The Coral Sea is located beyond the Great Barrier Reef, to the north east of the Capricorn Channel. Although there are occasional research visits to document seabirds nesting, these are mostly in winter when most birds breed but sea conditions are generally very poor. This expedition was planned in the calmest annual weather period and aimed to record pelagic wildlife in between the islands, though opportunity was taken to incidentally observe and record wildlife on islands as these were visited for nightly anchorage.

**DAY 1 – 11/12/06** Departed Mackay 13:00, headed towards Scawfell Island. Forecasts prohibited crossing the Capricorn channel. Made anchor at 16:00 at Scawfell Island. Continued north on falling sea at midnight towards Magdelaine Cay. Very little wildlife all day. A few **common terns**, **crested terns** and a lot of **mackerel tuna**. A couple of **turtles** (prob. green) and **beach stone curlews** on Scawfell Island, along with evidence of turtle nesting.

**DAY 2 – 12/12/06** Departed Scawfell Island towards East Diamond Islet. Brief views of a **Stoke's Sea Snake** in shallow Barrier Reef waters. Continued north towards East Diamond Islet reaching deep water after lunch. Good views of a pod of about **20 Short-finned Pilot Whales** followed by numerous seabirds including a few **Bulwer's Petrels** (only once previously recorded off as a single beach-washed specimen in Queensland), **Tahiti Petrels**, **Lesser Frigatebirds** and a lone **Australasian Gannet**. Of note, we recorded nine **White-tailed Tropicbirds**, mainly in pairs, indicating a possible local breeding population, though none are known.



White-tailed Tropicbird



Fairy Tern

**DAY 3 – 13/12/06** Arrived East Diamond Islet 08.00. Spent day on island. A morning island visit was done to estimate numbers of breeding birds, including very large numbers of **Red-footed Boobies** and **Lesser Frigatebirds** but also **Black and Common Noddies**, **Masked and Brown Boobies**, **Black-naped Terns**, **Sooty Terns**, **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters**, several **Red-tailed Tropicbirds** and a few **Great Frigatebirds**. During the day, **Fairy Terns** were found with young. There were three birds, including a juvenile. This is a very significant sighting as it represents the first breeding record of the species for the Northern Australia region and potentially the New Caledonian exsul subspecies. In the evening, a brief visit was done after dark to count **nesting turtles**. Before

we had left the vessel about a kilometre offshore, two nestlings were scooped from the sea and two others were found in the sand on the island. A total of 18 nesting turtles were counted on East Diamond Islet.

**Day 4 – 14/12/06** Departed East Diamond Islet headed towards Magdelaine Cay. Cruised from just before dawn, arriving at Magdelaine Cay at 13:30, a small island with no vegetation. The Cay was covered with evidence of **Green Turtles** nesting. By late afternoon when we were leaving the island, individuals had begun to come ashore to lay eggs. There were relatively few birds on the island except for two **Wandering Tattlers** an **Eastern Reef Egret** and **Crested Terns** all in breeding plumage. There were also **Tawny Nurse Sharks** in the shallows. The reef was in very good condition with fantastic diving and snorkelling. A few **Grey Reef Sharks**, **White-tipped Reef Sharks** and a **Hammerhead Shark** were seen by snorkellers.

**DAY 5 – 15/12/06** Departed Magdelaine Cay 08:30. Arrived Willis Island 13:00. Cruised between Magdelaine Cay and Willis Island, departing after a dawn snorkel and dive. The reef-edge at Magdelaine Cay was ringed with a huge several hundred metre drop-off. Relatively high densities of seabirds were seen on the crossing to Willis Island, comprising species breeding commonly on the surrounding islands: **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters**, **Red-footed** and **Brown Boobies**, **Black** and **Common Noddies**, **Sooty Terns**. Visited Willis Island to meet the four permanent resident meteorologists. There was an abundance of common breeding seabirds on the island except there were no frigatebirds

**DAY6 – 16/12/06** Headed towards Flinders Reef.

Severe weather was forecast in three days so the decision was made to leave Willis Island on the evening of the 15th and travel overnight to South Flinders Reef. At dawn we were just past Herald Cay and arrived at Flinders Reef at 14:00. Only common pelagic bird species were seen but this included the largest number of **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters** recorded on the trip. A total of 162 were seen in the morning alone, which was almost as many as seen in the rest of the trip. There were also large numbers of **Black Noddy** and **Red-footed Boobies**. South Flinders Reef itself contains only a small sand cay. Consequently, there were very few seabirds. Snorkelling and diving however were very productive. Highlights included feeding **White-tipped** and **Grey Reef Sharks**, **Tuna** and a **Hawksbill Turtle**.

**DAY 7-17/12/06** Final day in the Coral Sea. Departed Flinders Reef at dawn. Crossed Capricorn Channel and anchored late afternoon inside the outer Great barrier Reef at Dingo Reef.

The day began slowly with very few sightings in the first hour, until we reached a water depth of about 1000m. The rest of the crossing was dominated by **Tahiti Petrels** (c. 50 individuals) and **Bulwer's Petrels**. A few **White-tailed Tropicbirds** were seen, lending further support to the view that they may breed in the area. At least one individual was immature. Note, a heavily-marked juvenile was seen inside the outer Great Barrier Reef on the 18th. Before evening, in the vicinity of Dingo Reef, an **Indo-pacific Humpback Dolphin**, several **Bottlenose Dolphin** (offshore types) and a mother and calf **Bryde's Whale** were seen, as well as two **Devil Rays**.

## **DAY 8-18/12/06**

Weather began calm and on leaving Dingo Reef at dawn, eight **Spinner Dolphins** came into bow ride. Each animal was no more than 1.5m in length. A sighting of **Bottlenose Dolphins** and a heavily marked **White-tailed Tropicbird** in juvenile-plumage was followed by a brief view of a **Bryde's Whale**. Numerous **Roseate Terns** were also seen. By about 10am, the seas had risen to more than 2m, with a strong SE wind and observations ceased as we headed toward shelter at the Whitsunday Islands.

## **Field Naturalist Awards at Secondary College 2006**

Each year our club provides funding for end-of-year awards at the Castlemaine Senior Secondary College to encourage and reward student interest in environmental activities. Ashley Perry (Yr. 11) won her award this year for her enthusiastic participation in various treeplanting, bird watching, recycling and gardening projects including Clean Up Australia Day and National Tree Planting Day. Ashley also received this award in 2005.

The other winner for 2006 was Emily Odgers (Yr. 12). Emily received her award for her enthusiasm, her extensive general knowledge of sustainable and environmental matters, and for receiving top marks for Environmental Studies. Emily is enrolled in an environmental course at university this year.

Congratulations Ashley and Emily!

## **Major Donation to Australian Bush Heritage Fund**

The club has accumulated funds from a number of projects over recent years. One of the most profitable was the publication of the CD "Is it a Native?" produced by Ern Perkins. This is an illustrated listing of weeds commonly found in Central Victoria together with natives that are sometimes mistaken for weeds. Sales have been very successful and the net profits generated from these have been over \$3000. The interest earned by these funds has enabled the membership fees to be kept at the same levels for more than 6 years. The Committee recently decided that the excess funds should be donated to a worthwhile environmental cause and, after consideration, the Australian Bush Heritage Fund was selected. Previously, we have supported Birds Australia and Trust for Nature (Victoria).

The Australian Bush Heritage Fund is a non-profit organisation that protects Australian animals, plants and their habitats. It buys or otherwise acquires private land of outstanding conservation value where natural populations of threatened species are still living and important vegetation communities remain. More information and a listing of existing reserves may be obtained from their website: [www.bushheritage.org](http://www.bushheritage.org). Bush Heritage is seeking funds to establish more of these important reserves.

## **Dear Club Members,**

Thankyou all for your expressions of sympathy and support on the death of my mother, Doris Boyer, in November. The card sent by the club happened to be one of her favourites: a detail from A. M. E. Bale's *Three Roses*, which is in the Castlemaine Art Gallery, so was especially appreciated.

Rita Mills

## **The South-east Australian Naturalists Association (SEANA).**

The first field naturalists clubs association was formed in 1960. At that time there were many thriving naturalists clubs in western Victoria, and because of travel limitations, the association was confined to Western Victoria. Lesley and I attended the second meeting of the Western Victoria Field Naturalists Clubs Association (WVFNCA) at Halls Gap. The WVFNCA was a great success. It had a president and a secretary, who held office for two years and who formed the committee. It was they who sent out correspondence, attended to the association's conservation issues, arranged meetings and generally ran the association.

Because of the success of the association, there were moves to form a Victoria-wide association. This was the Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association. Transport was easier than when the WVFNCA formed, so the distance between clubs was less important.

The WVFNCA accumulated significant funds, particularly as Kingston Tours operated naturalists' tours to inland Australia, and gave a percentage of the profit to the WVFNCA. However, the Western Victorian clubs began to go into decline, and some clubs closed. It became difficult to get office bearers, and harder to hold regular campouts, and it was decided to amalgamate the two associations. The funds were transferred to the VFNCA and this is available to clubs. Recently the money has been used to finance publications, and the money is repaid by the borrowing club.

A third group in Victoria is the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (FNCV), which, despite its name, is essentially the Field Naturalists Club of Melbourne, and which now meets at Blackburn. There was constant confusion between FNCV and VFNCA, and the association decided to change its name to the South-east Australian Naturalists Association (SEANA). A committee of nine administers SEANA, each member holding office for three years. SEANA holds twice-yearly campouts, which might be bush camps, in a convention centre, or in a town and participants find their own accommodation. The next campout will be over the long weekend in the Otways. The president is Helen Langley (Timboon FNC) and the secretary is John Gregurke (FNC of Ballarat).

The Australia-wide group is the Australian Naturalists Network (ANN). The network was started by Dick Southcombe of the Geelong FNC. It holds regular get-togethers. The last was in the high country in Jan 2006, and the next will be at Darwin. The ANN is perhaps unique in that it does not have office-bearers. Apart from campouts, the ANN publishes a club directory. So if you are travelling in Victoria or interstate, you can look up the meeting times, and attend meetings of other clubs. The directory is on the SEANA web site.

Lesley and I have been going to campouts since 1962. It is a great way to learn about the natural history of Victoria, and see the special places known by the local naturalists. But the best part is meeting so many interesting people.

Ern Perkins

## Summer Observations

### Gill Raynor - Maldon

**December** In dams along Maldon -Castlemaine Road: Intermediate Egrets (2) and Swans (still in residence)

Visiting our bird bath in Maldon: Singing Honeyeater (1), Yellow-faced Honeyeaters (2), Superb Fairy Wrens, Silver eyes, Common Bronzews (2), numerous Red Wattlebirds, Goldfinches, Red-browed, Finches, Eastern Rosellas, Crimson Rosellas, and a Grey Currawong

**January** Shining Bronze Cuckoo in the mallow tree adjacent to our lounge room window! A small flock of Brown-headed Honeyeaters, and our resident New Holland Honeyeaters. Sadly, more Indian Mynahs and Rainbow Lorikeets. Both these species are in plague proportions in Blackburn, Melbourne where we used to live (encouraged by well meaning "bird feeders"! ) So, I hope that they're not on the rise here! Our usual visiting Musk Lorikeets are also in evidence, but not in the same numbers, and can't help worrying that they now have to compete with the Rainbow Lorikeets.

Fairy and Tree Martins and Welcome Swallows over the South German Mine area in Maldon.

### Alison and Amelia Rowe – Muckleford Forest Report

**December** A White-bellied Cuckoo Shrike - a "new bird" in our garden. 50+ Dusky Woodswallows wheeling overhead at dusk. White-browed Woodswallows are more usual, but I have only seen a few of these this summer. Complete lack (to date) of White-naped Honeyeaters this year when usually they are most populous after the Fuscous and Yellow-tufted. Brown-headed, White-eared, yellow-faced and Black-chinned Honeyeaters are present though. And we occasionally get the New Holland, though these seem mainly to be town birds.

30/12/06 A honeyeater the same size and vaguely like a Fuscous Honeyeater but with a much brighter upturned yellow ear plume and a decidedly streaky front. I thought maybe it was a juvenile but the chest was definitely smooth and the beak adult-looking. Looking in a bird book I found a match - a Yellow-plumed Honeyeater! Erns list says there has been only one sighting in the shire. He and Lesley have seen them in the gardens at Inglewood. Possibly the drought may have forced them further south. I saw it again a day or two later.

**January** Two partly downy young flame robins. I have never seen any of the red robins this early in the year before. Could their early appearance be due to the fires in the alpine areas? They did not have bands.

#### Other observations we have made in this dry dry summer...

Bees drowning by their hundreds in any available container of water - even the chook bowls. I have not seen this before.

Jacky lizards digging holes in my garden all over the place. Are they digging for water?

Amelia saw a frog on an artichoke leaf in the vegetable garden -a long way from any body of water, so surprising.

I haven't seen any eastern banjo frog spawn on the surface of our dam. Nor heard their distinctive calls!



## More Observations

- 26/12/06 **Koala** 10.30pm crossing road at McKenzies Hill where we do Roadside Cleanup. Geoff Harris
- 3/1/07 **Painted Button-quail** fossicking in the dry grasses outside the study window. Geoff Harris
- 21/1/07 **Wireleaf Mistletoe** *Amyema priessii* on **cassuarinas** along the Carisbrook -Maldon Road. Muriel Sovar
- **Rosy Hyacinth Orchids** *Dipodium roseum* in full bloom in Henry St and **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** close to the Welsh Village and in Castlemaine diggings. Richard Piesse
- Good views of the **McNaught Comet** reported in late January.
- A **Spotted Pardalote** followed by a **Striated Pardalote** In the bird bath at 'Broadways'. And George encountered a **Swamp Wallaby** at the Gaulton St Bridge, on his morning walk!

## Dawn Breakfast, 13/1/07.

Only eight members attended and not many birds were seen. We adjourned to the Reservoir wall for some sunshine and breakfast.

### Chinamans Point, Chewton.

Australian Magpie  
Common Bronzewing  
Chough  
Long-billed Corella  
Grey Fantail  
Red-browed Finch  
Goldfinch  
Fuscous Honeyeater  
New Holland Honeyeater  
Straw-necked Ibis  
Musk Lorikeet  
Eastern Yellow Robin  
Crimson Rosella

### Golden Point Reservoir, Chewton.

Eurasian Coot  
Pied Cormorant  
Australian Wood Duck  
Australian Magpie  
Clamorous Reed Warbler  
Crimson Rosella  
Purple Swamphen  
Superb Fairy Wren

## A Starter List for the Macedon Excursion on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

Richard Piesse will be leading our walk at Macedon on Saturday February 10. Here is a list of what he saw there on 24/1/07.

Echidna	Brachyscome multifida	Scenecio sp
Crimson Rosella	Brachyscome diversifolia	Clematis sp
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Geranium solanderi	
Superb Blue Wren	Olearia argophylla	
Brown Treecreeper	Podelepis jaceoides	
Red Wattlebird	Prostanthera lasianthos	
Small Bird of Prey	Stylidium graminifolium	
	Wahlenbergia stricta	

## The Australian Natural History Medallion.

The medallion is the major award for Australian naturalists.

In March 1939, J.K. Moir wrote to the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (FNCV), suggesting the establishment of an award in recognition of some person's service towards protecting native fauna and flora. The FNCV set up a committee to administer the award. The initial groups contacted were the Gould League, the FNCV, the Royal Australian Ornithologists Union (now Birds Australia), the Mitcham Field Naturalists Club, the Wattle League, The Bread and Cheese Club, and the Bird Observers Club. Further letters were sent to another ten organisations. The first meeting of the committee was in June 1939, and the first award was made in 1940 to Alec Chisolm. The cost of the production of the first medals was borne by Mr. Moir.

The criteria for the award is much the same as in 1940. "Any person is eligible for the award who it can be shown has increased popular or scientific knowledge of Australian Flora and Fauna, including Man, or who has assisted notably in protection or propagation of Flora and Fauna, or discovered new species of importance, or who has devoted much time to the study of the subject, or has done definite service by the publication of articles or books or by photography or by pictorial art, or by other means." The award is open to naturalists in all States, and who may be amateurs or professionals. The award is for activity over the past ten years.

The general overseeing of the award is by the general committee, which has representatives from many naturalist groups. and the award is determined by the awards committee. The award is usually presented at the November meeting of the FNCV. Lesley and I have attended these meetings when possible.

The 2006 award was to Ian Fraser, a naturalist from the A.C.T. His essential philosophy should be a model for all naturalists "understanding will lead to appreciation, and thus foster a conservation ethos". Ian's activities include biological surveys, publications, radio programs, the Canberra Ornithologists Group, numerous talks and presentations, various courses at the Australian National University Centre for Continuing Education, membership of committees and advisory groups, preparation of threatened species profiles, and many other. He is also author of several books.

The list of recipients over the years is a who's who of naturalists. Recipients include Malcolm Calder, David Fleay, P Crosbie Morrison, Charles Barrett, Jim Willis, Norman Wakefield, Jean Galbraith, Vincent Serventy, Helen Aston, Fred Rogers, Trevor Pescott and Graham Pizzey.

The cost of the medallion has risen greatly since the 1940s, and production is a major drain on the finances of the FNCV. Support for the award would be greatly welcomed.

Source: *The History of the Australian Natural History Medallion*, Sheila Houghton 1987.

*The Victorian Naturalist* Vol 123(6) Dec 2006, "Ian Fraser" by Ian Endersby.

## From The Business Meeting 25/1/07

- **Treasurers Report:** Hans presented the **Annual Report** showing that our income has exceeded expenditure by \$8211.80, largely due to the Woody Weed Grant of \$8250, giving a final balance of \$15,678.89. It is recommended that **Membership fees remain the same** for 2007.  
**For discussion at February Meeting:**
  - That the **2007 budget set aside \$700 for conducting a workshop** to look at the future direction of our club. This would include publicity, promotion, pamphlets, consultation, etc. aimed at attracting new members and satisfying existing member' needs.
  - That **\$3500 be donated to the Bush Heritage Fund** (See p 6).
- **Constitution.** The final draft is not yet ready for general comment.
- **Threatened Species Roadside Report.** Letter received from John Anthony (MAS) acknowledging work carried out by club members for this report.
- The **new edition of the Weed CD – "Is it a native"** is to be published privately by Ern Perkins and the proceeds donated to environmental causes.
- **FNCV Appeal** for donations to fund their Natural History Medallion Awards. (See p10).
- **Club GPS** donated by Jenny Thomas to be loaned to Margaret Panter for botanical survey work
- **Policy for use of digital projector** presented and adopted.
- **Price of publications to be reduced** from \$1 to 40c and from 50c to 20c.
- **Aerial map of Cape Broom** area provided to Athol to draw up grid to help monitor progress of further work in the area.

## Membership Forms

This year we have sent out membership forms with the newsletter. Members wishing to renew their subscription are asked to fill out their form and return it with their fees. If paying at the AGM, fill it out and bring it with you.

**Correction:** Rita Mill's daughter, Sue Kennedy, wrote last months article *A Bat at the MCG*; not Rita's sister, Jenny Heyme, as printed. Sorry Sue.

**FEBRUARY OBSERVATIONS** (Jot down your observation to bring along to the March meeting)

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club.

# Castlemaine Field Naturalists Programme

## February 2007

**General meetings** - (second Friday of each month, except January) are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) Hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 8.00 pm.

**Field Outings** - (Saturday following the general meeting) leave from the carpark opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm sharp unless stated otherwise. BYO morning and/or afternoon tea. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.

**Business meetings** - fourth Thursday of each month, except December, at 27 Doveton Street, at 7.30 pm. All members are invited to attend.

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB MEETINGS AND EXCURSIONS.**

**Fri Feb 9. Annual General Meeting.** Election of Office Bearers and Committee followed by A Camel Trek in Central Australia. Geraldine Harris. UCA Hall, 8pm.

**Sat Feb 10. Field Outing: Macedon – a walk from Day's Picnic Ground.** Depart from opposite the motel in Duke St at 1.30pm sharp and meet at the Macedon Hotel. BYO afternoon tea. Leader: Richard Piesse, Ph 0407 087 319.

**Fri Feb 24. Roadside Cleanup.** Meet near Tait's Decorative Iron, Pyrenees Highway, C'maine. at 8.30am. Gloves, garbage bags and red safety vests supplied. Wear sturdy footwear. Contact: Hans van Gemert. Ph 5472 1082.

**Mar 7–13. SEANA Campout in the Otways.** Host: Geelong Field Naturalists Club.

**Fri Mar 9. March Meeting: The Mount Alexander Sustainability Group.** Dean Bridgefoot. UCA Hall, 8pm.

**Sat Mar 10. Field Trip: North Harcourt Reservoir.** Depart from opposite the motel in Duke St at 1.30pm sharp. BYO afternoon tea, chairs and binoculars. Leader: Rita Mills. Ph 5472 4553.

### 2006 Committee

Rita Mills (Pres).....	Ph 5472 4553	George Broadway (Sec)....	Ph 5472 2513
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