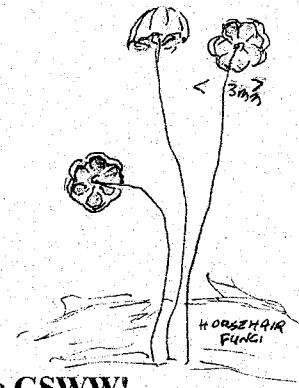


Castlemaine Naturalist July 2002 Vol. 26.6 #290



GDTA on the GSWW!

During the June long weekend a group of Great Dividing Trail association members ventured into the far south west of the state to walk several sections of the Great South West Walk which joins Portland with Nelson by two routes - one inland, which for approximately half its length follows the magnificent Glenelg river; and the second which basically follows the coastline along Discovery Bay.

Our long walk (approx. 25 kms) followed the Glenelg River from one of the campsites (with all facilities) on the river bank, back into Nelson. Not many birds were sighted on the river, but several groups of Pelicans appeared below the high cliffs. The bush was quite wet and few small birds were seen. The usual number of rosellas appeared to brighten our day.

Our second walk (approx. 16 kms) was a circuit walk taking in the shores of a beautiful lake, rolling coastal sand dune country and a 6 km stretch of wind-swept beach. The birds in evidence on the second day were much more obvious. On the shores of Lake Monibeong many Black-tailed Native Hens and Swamphens roamed around the campsites. Along the beaches Pied Oyster-catchers, Red-capped Dotterels and Fairy Terns occurred commonly with Pacific Gulls in smaller numbers.

I would recommend a trip to the GSWW for the bushwalker and nature lover. Probably the winter is not the best season to visit, but we, fortunately, were quite lucky with the weather.

Richard Piesse

Birds are Where You Find Them

The following is an extract (with permission) from a recent publication *Birds of the Lismore District*, by Bob Hughes and Michael Sturmfels of Lismore, Vic. Those Field Nats with good memories will recall that Bob and Michael led us on our excursion to the Linton "Bird Paddock" Sanctuary in November 1999.

"Bird watching is an intermittently exciting occupation. Just at the time of finishing this booklet (May 2002), a plantation of flowering Swamp Yate *Eucalyptus eremophila (occidentalis)* between the railway line and Lismore supplied no less than six birds rarely seen in the plains - Zebra Finches, Budgerigars, Swift Parrots, and Yellow-tufted, Fuscous and White-naped Honeyeaters."

And who would have expected a dead Arctic Tern to be picked up in Camperdown (Wheeler, 1967)?

Since that was written a Spotted Harrier has been added to the Linton list. So there you are Birdos. Keep looking; you never know what you may find in the next tree.

Ken Dredge

PS No wonder we couldn't find any Swift Parrots up here. Bob has a dozen or so feeding on Sugar Gum blossom at his place at Lismore. K.D.

Lyal Excursion, 15/6/02

About a dozen of us took the opportunity to visit the Moody property at Lyal. Although very cool, it was a glorious winter afternoon after the rain. We met Craig, Linda and Lachlan near "Lyal Glen" and they led us to the first stop to see two Bendigo (Fairy) Wax *Philotheca verrucosus*, which are the last surviving ones in the area. Another kilometre on and we came to the gate of their property, not far from which is an old fireplace and chimney still standing - and a fire lit, ready for when we got back to the gazebo tent Moodys had set up for afternoon tea!

They led us on an about 4 or 5 km walk over the property. They are gradually working on weed species, encouraging bare patches to grow over again, allowing natural regrowth and planting local species. Its all gradually coming together, but the local cows still think they should be able to make use of the property if no one is looking - they hope! - and that makes things a bit harder.

We walked along the river strip which they are leasing, and found River Bottlebrush growing on the banks and on some of the sand islands.

We got back to the afternoon tea spot about ¼ to 5, and the Moodys pointed out their two Bulloaks - both males. They'd love to find a local female where they could collect seed to give the plants a chance to spread back on the property.

Thank you Craig, Linda and Lachlan, we wish you much success in your venture.

Rita Mills

These plants were added to the Moodys' plant list during the June Excursion.

* indicates an introduced species.

Acacia melanoxylon	Blackwood
* Acetosella vulgaris	Sheep Sorrel
Asplenium flabellifolium	Necklace Fern
* Cirsium vulgare	Spear Thistle
* Critesion murinum spp glaucum	Blue Barley-grass
* Cynosurus echinatus	Rough Dog's-tail
* Dactylis glomerata	Cocksfoot
Dianella longifolia	Pale Flax-lily
Epilobium billardierianum ssp cinereum	Grey Willow-herb
* Erodium botrys	Big Heron's-bill
Geranium affin. solanderi	Austral Cranesbill
* Hypochoeris radicata	Cat's-ear
Juncus amabilis	Hollow Rush
Juncus subsecundus	Finger Rush
Lepidosperma sp.	Sword-sedge
* Oxalis pes-caprae	Soursob
Phragmites australis	Common Reed
* Plantago sp.	Plantain
Pleurosorus rutifolius	Blanket Fern
Poa labillardierei	Common Tussock-grass
* Polyopogon monspeliensis	Annual Beard-grass
Pultenaea largiflorens	Twiggy Bush-pea
* Romulea rosea	Onion-grass
* Rosa rubiginosa	Sweet Briar
* Rumex conglomeratus	Clustered Dock
* Rumex crispus	Curled Dock
Rumex dumosus	Wiry Dock
Stellaria pungens	Prickly Starwort
* Trifolium angustifolium	Narrow-leaf Clover
Typha domingensis	Narrowleaf Cumbungi
Viola hederacea	Ivy-leaf Violet

Ern Perkins

Extinct Plants of the Castlemaine District

How many plants have become extinct in the Castlemaine district since European settlement? It's an impossible question to answer. I do not know what was here before settlement, and plants that I think to be extinct may be dormant, perhaps waiting for a very wet season, or a hot fire, or be growing in places that have not been searched. Some that the plants that once grew in the district, and which have not been recorded recently to my knowledge, include the following:

Daddy Long-legs (*Caladenia filamentosa*) is an orchid with long slender petals and sepals. It was recorded for Taradale by Fred Taylor, pre 1976. [ref. 4]

Magnificent Spider-orchid (*Caladenia magnifica*). This resembles the Crimson Spider-orchid (it was once considered to be a variety of *Caladenia patersonii*). It has long, yellowish petals and sepals, that are streaked with crimson. It was collected at Clydesdale in 1936. [ref. 1]

Rosella Spider-orchid (*Caladenia rosella*). It is another species that was included in *Caladenia patersonii*. It has bright pink flowers. [ref. 1]

Small Duck-orchid (*Caleana minor*) resembles the Duck Orchid, but is smaller. There are records for the Castlemaine-Chewton Historic area and near the Barkers Creek tip by Fred Taylor pre 1976. [ref. 4]

Naked Beard-orchid (*Calochilus imberbis*). This orchid resembles a Purple Beard-orchid that has lost its beard. It is absent from its former locations. [ref. 2]

Swamp Diuris (*Diuris palustris*). An orchid from swamp areas. [ref. 1,2]

Purple Diuris (*Diuris punctata* var. *punctata*). This spectacular orchid was once said to be common near Mt. Alexander. I have not seen one locally. Some may still be present on private property at Sutton Grange. [ref. 1,2]

Horned Orchid (*Orthoceras strictum*) has been recorded for Smiths Reef forest. Searches over many years has failed to locate this orchid. [ref. 2]

Short-lip Leek Orchid (*Phrasophyllum brevilabre*). I have not seen this orchid. It grows after hot summer fires, so may appear if conditions are suitable. [ref. 1]

Red-beak Orchid (*Lyperanthus nigricans*) was recorded on the Mt. Alexander golf course in spring, 1972 by Mrs Sartori. I know of no other local record [Ref. 3]

Slender Ruddyhood (*Pterostylis aciculiformis*). [ref. 1]

Brittle Greenhood (*Pterostylis truncata*) has been recorded for the area north of Castlemaine. I have not seen it. [ref. 1]

Robust Greenhood (*Pterostylis valida*) has only been recorded for the North Harcourt. It is now considered to be extinct in Victoria. [ref. 1]

Great Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra aristata*). An article in the Bendigo Naturalist in the 1970s, recorded dozens of this orchid at Taradale. I saw one, about 20 years ago. It is probably now extinct here. It is believed that

illegal collection by orchid growers has hastened, if not caused, its demise. There also records for Muckleford by Fred Taylor [ref. 4]

Twisted Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra flexuosa*). Recorded for Smiths Reef Forest by Rita Mills and Fred Taylor. [ref. 2]

Blue-star Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra holmesii*) has been recorded for Castlemaine. [ref. 1]

Fringed Sun-orchid (*Thelymitra luteocilium*) has small, pale to deep pink flowers and has been recorded for Smiths Reef forest. [ref. 2]

Victorian Christmas Bush (*Prostanthera lasianthos*) was recorded for Specimen Gully in 1976 at one of the Club's earliest excursions. [ref. 2,4]

Cluster Pomaderris (*Pomaderris racemosa*) was recorded for the Chewton area by von Mueller, pre 1900. [ref. 4]

Sprawling Saltbush (*Atriplex suberecta*). Recorded for Castlemaine railway yards by Frank Robbins in 1946. It may have been not indigenous.

Mother Shield-fern (*Polystichum proliferum*). This fern was recorded by a Mr Spencer, for Victoria Gully (Castlemaine, near the old tourist information Centre) before 1896. A specimen was recorded by Ian Higgins, from a mine shaft in Chewton in 1988. (ref. 4)

Slender Tick-trefoil (*Desmonium varians*) A small member of the pea family. It was recorded by von Mueller at Forest Creek towards the end of the 1800s. [ref. 4]

Mountain Pepper (*Tasmannia lanceolata*). Mountain Pepper was recorded at Mt. Alexander by Major Mitchell. Searches by members of the Castlemaine and Bendigo Field Naturalists Club over some years has failed to find this species. It should be easy to find, if present.

Anchor Plant (*Discaria pubescens*) was recorded by Major Mitchell at Newstead. It is a spiny shrub and is apparently extinct at Newstead. There are recent records for Joyces Creek.

Whorled Ziera (*Ziera aspalathoides*). A shrub. Recorded by Rev W.C. Tippet for the Maldon Historic Area in October, 1921. Searches have failed to find this species.

Small Grass-tree (*Xanthorrhoea minor*) was recorded during roadside surveys in 1992. It is no longer in the former areas.

Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*). All known specimens on public land are now absent. There are reports of some growing on private property at

Sutton Grange. Silver Banksias are sometimes included in revegetation projects, and records in the future may not be for indigenous plants. [ref. 2]

Trailing Hopbush (*Dodonaea procumbens*). Recorded for Golflinks Hill, Castlemaine, by Frank Robbins Oct. 1939. A specimen is held by the National Herbarium, Melbourne. [ref. 4]

Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*). Was recorded at Specimen Gully, 1975. There are no recent records. [ref. 2]

Cotony Haeckeria (*Haeckeria ozothamnoides*) was recorded for Mt. Alexander by von Mueller (1800s) and at Chewton by von Mueller. One was still present on Mt. Alexander in 1980. [ref. 2,4]

References

1 *The Orchids of Victoria* Gary Backhouse and Jeffrey Jeanes, Miegunyah Press, 1995

2. *Castlemaine Plant List*, Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club, 2002.

3 *Bendigo Naturalist*, Vol. 5 no 3, Dec. 1972

4 *The Distribution and Conservation of Vascular Plants in the North Central Area, Victoria*, A. C. Beaglehole 1982, Western Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association.

Ern Perkins

Observations

- Robyn Holden reported having a pair of Tawny Frogmouths perched on the clothesline at the top of Hunter St.
- Penny and Tom Garnett spotted a Rufous Fantail in their garden near the Stadium. They believe that it would be just passing through.
- Hans van Gemert spoke of the Black Cockatoos which had built up from just five birds a few years ago, at Taradale, to a flock of 60 this year. Robyn van Smeerdijk commented that there has been Yellow-tailed Blacks at their property near Lancefield over the past two years also.
- Craig Moody told of an incident at the night football where he spotted a Black-shouldered Kite hunting prey under the floodlights at 10 o'clock at night.
- Robins have been making appearances again. Peggy Munroe has had a Scarlet and a Flame Robin at her place in Burnett Road. The Buff-banded Rail (I'm afraid I called it a Chestnut-banded Rail in the first report, Ed.) is still at her place, and is getting to recognise her and not run off when she appears.
- Noellene Mills says that the Flame Robins have re-appeared in Martin St after "many years", and a Scarlet Robin pair has appeared in Blakeley Rd. for the first time I can remember. Rita Mills

FROM THE BUSINESS MEETING, 27/6

WVFNC Spring Camp October 25 - 27, 2002 at Ballarat

The first circular for the camp has arrived - be sure to put the date in your diary. These camps are most enjoyable, and during this one the 50th anniversary of FNCB is being celebrated together with the launch of the publication "Discovering Ballarat's Bushland - a Guide to 34 selected natural places in the Ballarat Region".

Ern Perkins has the circular with details of available accommodation (self accommodating this time) if needed, venues for registration, the dinner, lunch on Sunday (lunch boxes are available on order), etc., and registration forms.

The projected program is a varied and interesting one. There will be several full and half day excursions available, including walks, car excursions, flora, birding, geology, etc.

Guest speaker at the anniversary dinner and book launch will be Tim D'Ombra and he will be speaking on Local Conservation Issues.

If you've never been to a Campout before, make this a first!

A **50 page book**, discovering Ballarat's Bushland, by the Ballarat FNC, is to be launched at the campout. It details 34 bush areas within a 50 km radius of the city, with directions, descriptions of habitat, flora fauna, geology and history. There is a map and 8 pages of colour illustrations. Limp cover. RRP IS \$12, but you can order it for \$10, and either have it posted for an extra \$2 or pick it up at the camp. **Order forms available.**

The booklet "**Declining Woodland Animals and Birds of the Maldon/Newstead Area**" by NRE is available for borrowing.

"Bushcare is Not Trivial" Trivia Night. Teams of up to 10 people will answer questions with a biodiversity, natural resource and Landcare theme, competing for a range of fantastic prizes (!) Entry \$2 per person. Nibbles and light supper provided. **We are fielding a team.** If you are interested contact Ern Perkins. More details at the July meeting.

Welcome to new member Debbie Farmer.

Peter Johnson of NRE, Darren Bos and Ern Perkins recently met to discuss a **long term project for weed clearing** in the Botanic Gardens west of the creek, (near the butterfly area). The aim this year is to complete clearing the eastern face.

Note - For the August Newsletter, please leave any articles at 27 Doveton Street.

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST JULY 2002

PROGRAM

General Meetings are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) hall, at 8.00pm on the second Friday of each month, except January.

Excursions leave promptly at times stated, usually on the Saturday after the general meeting. There are NO excursions on TOTAL FIRE BAN days. **Also note** that outdoor events are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions.

Business Meetings are held at 27 Doveton Street on the 4th Thursday of each month, except December, at 7.30pm. All members are invited to attend.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO CLUB MEETINGS AND
EXCURSIONS

Fri. July 12 **Reptiles**. Speaker is Darren Green of Bendigo. UCA hall, 8pm

Sat July 13, **Fungi at Bullarto Res. and/or Firth Park**. Leave 13 Mostyn St at 1.30pm. Leader, G. Broadway.

Thurs. July 25 **Combined U3A/FNC Bird Excursion**. Leave the Octopus, Duke St at 8.30am. Leader is E. Perkins.

Sat. Aug. 3 **Swift Parrot Survey**. Meet at the Octopus 8.30am. Details at the July meeting.

Fri. Aug. 9 Dr Barry Golding, speaking on the **Great Dividing Trail**. UCA hall, 8pm. Barry was the first speaker at the newly inaugurated club in 1976.

Sat. Aug. 10 **Bung Bong State Forest** (between Maryborough and Avoca). Leader is C. Morris. Leave CHIRP, 13 Mostyn St. at 1.30pm.

Sat. Aug. 10 **"Bushcare is not Trivial" Trivia Night**. 7.30 at the Town Hall. Details p.7. and at the July meeting.

Thurs. Aug. 15. **Broom Pull** at the Butterfly area of the Botanic Gardens. 9am start. Details later. **Note change of date.**

Thurs. Aug 25 **U3A/FNC Bird Excursion**. Meet at the Octopus 8.30am.

Fri. Sept. 13 **Namibia, SW Africa** with Bill and Robyn van Smeerdijk. UCA hall 8pm.

Sat. Sept. 14. **Conglomerate Gully**, near Sunbury. Take lunch, pm tea. Wear sturdy footwear. Leave 27 Doveton St. at 10am. Leader is P. Garnett.

Fri. Oct. 11 - **The Biological Control of Weeds**, Speaker is Dr David McLaren of the Keith Turnbull Institute. UCA hall, 8pm.

Disclaimer - The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the club.

2002 Committee E. Perkins (President) ph 5472 3124, C. Morris (V.P. and Grievance Officer), G. Broadway (Sec.) ph. 5472 2513, H. van Gemert (treas.), R. Mills (N/L Ed. and P.O.), M. Badminton, G. Harris, B. Maund, M. Oliver, R. Piesse.

Subscriptions for 2002 Ordinary Membership: Single, \$22 Family, \$30

Pensioner or student: Single \$19 Family \$24.

Supporting: \$31

The subscription also covers postage of the 'Castlemaine Naturalist'.

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

Incorporation # A0003010B