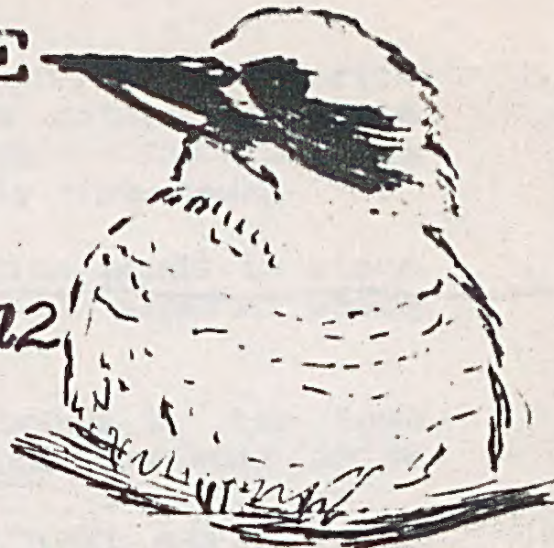


# CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

APRIL '87

Vol 12-3 # 122



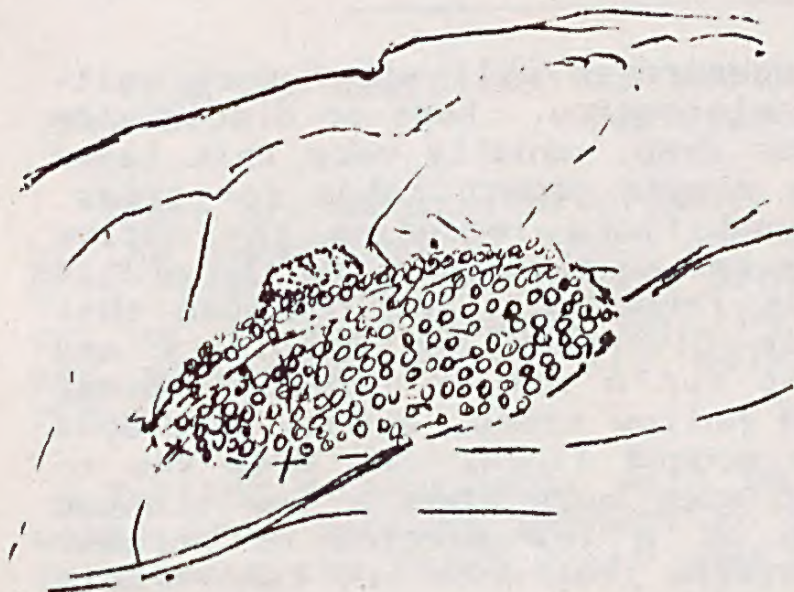
## February/March Observations, Barkers Creek

Three young Kookaburras out of the nest in the bank, looking quaintly top-heavy with their 1" long tails.  
Lone juvenile Red-capped Robin feeding with Thornbills - indications, a female.  
Rainbow Bee-eaters gathering for their northward journey.  
Spine-tailed Swifts hawking insects.  
Many young Crimson Rosellas feeding and moving together.  
The masses of Common Brown Butterflies, around all summer, gradually decreasing.  
Pair of Sugar gliders in one of our logs again.  
Two small, long-tailed Geckoes catching insects, attracted by light to the windows.  
Wood White Butterflies on mistletoe - depositing eggs?  
Female Leaden Flycatcher visiting our bird-table to drink and bathe.  
Seven Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters (family group?) doing likewise.

Wyn Palmer.

## WINGLESS MOTH

I came across this cocoon on a grey box leaf. It is an open net of rather stiff silk made like and upturned boat, with stiff hairs from the caterpillar scattered through it. The transparent pupal case is visible inside, quite a bit smaller than the cocoon. The outside is covered by pearly eggs, deposited there by the tiny wingless female, still clinging to it, of one of the tussock moths. She is rather dumpy, and covered by white down. The moths do not feed, but die after mating and laying the eggs.







### GOLDMINING v. ENVIRONMENT

This is the text of a letter sent to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands by the Bird Observers Group of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, in December 1986.

Dear sir,

The members of the bird Observers Group (Bendigo Field Naturalists Club) are deeply concerned by the nature and extent of current gold-mining proposals in North Central Victoria. At a time when public awareness of the importance of the environment is increasing, miners are being given the go-ahead for the most indiscriminate surface mining operations on both private and crown land using bulldozers to clear all trees and surface soil.

As field naturalists we are acutely aware that the bushland of this district is still suffering the consequence of repeated clear-felling during the era of the great mines. In particular the box/ironbark forests of North Central Victoria are critically short of the hollow trees on which so much of our native birds and mammals are dependent. All our parrots, cockatoos, treecreepers and owls and some of the birds of prey, kingfishers, swallows and pardalotes require hollow trees in which to nest. Hollow trees do not form unless left to mature for a long time, probably in excess of 100 years. How much worse will it be this time if the forest is not merely cut down but the shrubs and ground flora completely destroyed and the top soil removed.

Claims that the bush regenerates well after such bulldozing are exaggerated and misleading. Loss or disturbance of the precious and, in our area, usually very thin layer of topsoil will result in slower growth rates for trees, complete loss of the ground flora including the native grasses on which many birds and animals feed and the orchids for which this district is renowned. The regrowth that occurs will be lacking in diversity and stability and will be a poor replacement for a mature, diverse forest with large, attractive and hollow trees, a well-developed shrub layer and a diverse ground flora. We urge you to the view that consists of much more than a few stunted trees and a proliferation of a few species of shrubs. A forest is a complex ecosystem that does not take kindly to the sort of gross disturbance involved in surface mining.



- With this in mind we urge you to actively support:-
- a. The complete prohibition of surface mining in state Parks and all other biological reserves. The Kooyoorra and Whipstick State Parks are particularly threatened
  - b. The collection of realistic regeneration bonds in place of the current absurd tokens required of miners, where mining is to proceed.

We believe that miners should be bound by the same sound environmental principles that all of us must abide by.

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From Maryborough F.N.C. Newsletter, Aug '86 - Jan '87

### African Daisy, *Senecio pterophorus*

'As most Club members know, this No 1 noxious weed was found last year by members' (of the Maryborough Club) "in Paddys Ranges. The Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands have been quick to start an eradication program.

'Eradication work couldn't start until January 1987 until the weed was in flower and people knew how to recognise the plant.

'The African Daisy seems to have been almost confined to the area burnt in the January 1985 bush-fire.

Nine hundred and forty four plants were found from Avoca to Dunach and up to Maryborough, forty seven plants were found in the Clunes swamps.

'African Daisy is spreading into Victoria from South Australia. The weed has been found in Horsham, Hamilton and Maryborough areas. Several plants were also found on the Mornington Peninsular.'

Bruce Osborn

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### From the draft copy of the Outdoor Recreation Plan for Victoria

There are several programmes underway or being developed by the Department of Sport and Recreation, often in liaison with other agencies. These programmes include the inventory of walking trails in the Grampians, and inventory and documentation of all walking trails in the Barwon region.

Further developments will be on the walking trail networks from Geelong through to Cape Otway, and programmes to promote the Great South West Walk in the Glenelg region.



## EXCURSION TO PILCHERS BRIDGE

The excursion was in beautiful autumn weather. We left the Sutton Grange - Redesdale road to travel north along Barty's Road - one of the most beautiful of the district's lanes. At the start it is lined with red-gums, but it soon reaches the sedimentary rock and is lined with red box, grey box, long leaf box and yellow gum. Areas like this - paddocks with scattered trees, and a variety of trees along a roadside, and enough of them to give shelter makes for good bird habitats.

Pilcher's bridge is no longer obvious at Pilcher's Bridge - we could see the old road to what was presumably the original bridge. Now, alas, there is a rather uninteresting concrete causway. Some beautiful red gums make up for the shortage of bridges however.

The week before, dozens of Tree Martins were flying in the nearby paddocks, but during this excursion very few were seen.

Birds identified included the following

Dusky Woodswallow - three on a branch wherein full view

Magpies - scattered throughout the trip

Willy Wagtail - several seen

Cockatoo - one largish flock along the road

Wedge-tailed Eagle - Pair soaring very high up

Blue Wren - fewer seen than the previous week

Grey Thrush - in undergrowth

White-throated Tree Creeper

Restless Flycatcher - heard and seen

Hooded Robin - male and female seen

White-winged Chough - several flocks seen

Welcome Swallow - several, particularly near dams

Tree Martin - scarce compared with previous week

Eastern Rosella - many seen along roadside

Red-rump Parrot - several

Galah - only a few seen

White-plumed Honeyeater - seen by a few of the group

Noisy Miner - seen in red gum areas

Musk Lorikeet - heard only

Magpie Lark - several seen

Kookaburra - heard

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike - in ironbark area

Diamond Firetail

Jacky Winter,

Striated Pardalote



At the dam near the Axedale - Button Grange road were

Yellow-billed Spoonbill - three on bank

Little Pied Cormorant - number in water and on bank

Maned Duck - group on bank

Masked Lapwing - several present

Coot - solitary specimen

White Ibis - single

Little Grebe in breeding plumage.

E.P.

From Maryborough F.N.C. Newsletter, Aug '86 - Jan '87

'Observations of birds of prey in Central Victoria over 20 years, have indicated a decline in numbers of most raptor species, most noticable being Wedgetail and Little Eagles and the Whistling Kite.

'Whistling Kites, once a common bird, were generally found along forest edges and along the Tullaroop, McCallum and Bet Bet Creeks, and were also readily found in the open farm country of the district.

'Some years ago at our local sewerage ponds as many as 20 Whistling Kites could be seen using frogs as a source of food.

'Surveys of these areas today reveal no more than an isolated Whistler.

"What could be the cause of their declining numbers? Perhaps the scarcity of rabbits, once a major food, or perhaps spraying of pastures for insects which once provided the Whistlers with sustenance.

'Reports of any sightings of Whistling Kites would be appreciated.'

Y. and R. Bishop.

From "Wirrakee", Bendigo Field Naturalists' Newsletter  
November 1985

"...the number of known insect species throughout the world is over one million."

R Allan

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Articles for the magazine can be left at Tonks Hardware.  
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## OBSERVATIONS FOR MARCH

OWLET NIGHTJAR was reported last month by Rita Mills for Kalimna. Rita has added to the to this by a record for Castlemaine North.

COMMON SANDPIPER AT HARCOURT NORTH. Despite its name, Common Sandpipers are not at all common, particularly for this district, so a record for Harcourt North Reservoir for early on the Labour Day holiday is quite an unusual one. Some visits to the reservoir by some early risers is needed to confirm this sighting

MUCKLEFORD BIRD NOTES. Black-chinned Honeyeaters have been seen at the Goldfilelds Nursery, as well as Pied Cormorants and four White Ibis.

CRESTED SHRIKE TIT has been recorded for the Lyall - Pilchers Bridge road by Rita Mills.

ADDITIONS TO THE BIRD LIST, all for area q are

Wedge-tailed Eagle	Musk Lorikeet
Tree Martin	Hooded Robin
Diamond Firetail	White-winged Chough
Starling	Crested Shrike-tit

Black-chinned Honeyeater is also a new record for area w.

BLUE BILL DUCK has been seen on a dam near Pilcher's Bridge, also on Mar 8th, a week before the Duck Open season. The dam is just outside the bird list area.

RAINBOW BEE-EATERS have been seen in large flocks at Walmer. Possibly congegating before migrating north?

PLANT LIST ADDITIONS all by Don Franklin are

Tender Brake (*Pteris tremula*), area 7, for water channel east of Mt Alexander  
Drooping Mistletoe (*Amyema pendula*), for Mt Alexander  
Desert Ash (*Fraxinus oxycarpa*), east of Mt Alexander, "now established over a considerable area (several hectares) with numerous plants of all ages".

WHISTLING KITES. Maryborough F.N.C. is interested in reports of Whistling Kites.

WHITE-PLUMED HONEYEATERS have been seen in large numbers along the Lyall-Pilchers Bridge Road.

TREE FERNS have been reported for the Harcourt North area. They once grew in the Castlemaine North area, and perhaps were formerly moderately widespread in the district

BROWN-HEADED HONEYEATERS have been seen in Castlemaine North.



# CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC. BOX 324 CASTLEMAINE.

COMMITTEE Ern Perkins(Pres), Barabara Maund(Sec), Geoff Sitch(Treas), Maggie Oliver(Vice Pres), Kaye Turner(Exc. sec), George Broadway(Libr), Rita Mills(Newletter), Gunter Liebl, Margaret Dunne, Elma Kelly, Jack Dare(I/P Pres), Berri Perry, Robyn Holden, George Evans.

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Subscriptions for 1987 are

Pensioner/student	\$3	Single	\$5
Family	\$8	Supporting	\$12
Newsletter Posted	Membership subscription plus \$5		

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Supper roster

Mar : J. Buntine, R. Warne  
April: B. Perry, B. Ibbitson  
May : E. Kelly, G. Sitch  
June : B. Eames, L. Perkins  
July : F. Blake, E. Blake  
Aug : T. Collins, B. Collins  
Sept : R. Holden, M. Holden  
Oct : E. Duffin, B. Maund  
Nov : M. Willis, M Willis

## STREAMS FOR DREDGING

This advice has been received by the club from the Minister for Water Resources, and is a list of streams in the Castlemaine Area currently listed for seductor dredge use.

Bendigo Creek downstream from Huntly;

Loddon River and tributaries upstream of Cairn Curran excluding Jim Crow Creek;

Back Creek (tributary of Campaspe);

McIvor Creek; and

Bet Bet Creek

The decision on listing streams for dredging is based on recommendations from an interdepartmental committee comprising representatives from the departments of Conservation Forests and Lands, Industry Technology and Resources, the Environment Protection Authority and Rural Water Commission.

Since 1983 dredging has not been permitted in Jim Crow Creek, and the Loddon between Laanacoorie and Cairn Curran, on the basis of reports on fish populations and stream habitats.



## CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. AGENDA

Excursions leave promptly at the times shown. Date, time and locality of excursions may be changed at the monthly meetings; if not at the meeting check with a committee member.

Monthly meetings at High School at 8.00 p.m.

Wed 8 April. HERITAGE WEEK GARDENS WALK. The C.F.N.C. tour of to see some of the trees in the Botanic Gardens. Meet at Rose Garden car park (Downes Rd.) at 4.00 p.m.

Fri 10 April. THE HIGH COUNTRY. Some scenes of Australian Alps with Ern Perkins.

Sat 11 April. HAMILTONS CROSSING. Excursion leaves S.E.C., Mostyn St at 1.30 p.m. Leader is M. Oliver.

Sun 12 April. HERITAGE WEEK GARDENS WALK. The second of the Gardens's Trees walks. Meet at Rose Garden car park (Downes Rd) at 4.00 p.m.

Fri 15 May. PERTH TO CENTRAL AUSTRALIA with Pat Bingham. Note that this is the 3rd Friday in May.

Sat 16 May. THE CLAY PITS. Excursion to Donkey Gully and the clay pits. Leader is G. Broadway. Meet S.E.C., Mostyn St at 1.30 p.m.

Sat 6 Jun-Mon 8 Jun. GEELONG F.N.C. CAMPOUT AT CASTLEMAINE. All excursions leave from Rose Garden car park, Downes Road.

Sat 9 am. Gower School and Muckleford

Sat. 11 am. Local Geology

Sat. 1.30 pm. Local Eucalypts tour to Mt Alexander

Sat 7 pm. Slides of Castlemaine District - at Anglican Church hall (Cr Forest St and Kennedy St)

Sun 9.30 am. Mineral Springs tour, all day

Sun 7 pm. Wildflowers of the goldfields. Anglican Church hall (Cr Forest and Kennedy St)

Mon 9 am. Clay Pits, Monk, Spring Gully. Take lunch.

Mon 2 pm. Geelong FNC depart for Geelong

Fri 12 June. KASHMIR - FLOWERS, LAKES and MOUNTAINS with Gretna Weste.

IP1Frid 14 Aug. EUROPE AND AMERICA with Mr G. Barry.

Frid 9 Oct. CHINA with John Zwar.

Sun 18 Oct. MUCKLEFORD FOREST with Bendigo F.N.C. Meet Market Car Park at 10.00 am. Bring your lunch.