



# CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

MARCH '88

#132

## GEE LONG WEEKEND

The weekend spent with Geelong FNC at their invitation proved to be full of interest. Those who arrived early enough spent the morning at the Marine Studies Centre, where numerous local fish and marine life are kept in aquaria for study. They were actually there to witness the demise of one crab at the claws of another, larger one, which had been sharing the tank for three months. The large crab used one claw to hold the remains of its victim while it used the other to transfer its meal to its mouth.

After lunch in the Park the whole party (the dawdlers had arrived by then!) set off across the causeway and the army checkpoint, and doubled back to the yacht club car park on Sand Island. From there we walked. From the car park we saw a group of cormorants, which included four different species. We'd walked only a short distance when we saw hundreds (thousands?) of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Golden Plovers, as well as a few Red-capped Plovers and Red-necked Stints. Around the other side of the man-made island a group were cannon-netting, but the net wasn't fired until we were almost back to the cars so we missed the opportunity to see the birds close-up, but some did manage to see the Fairy Terns nesting on a bare patch of sand further on. Those who did go over to see the eggs (under escort) were "shown off the premises" in no uncertain, by the very indignant little birds.

After a cuppa the group divided, some going on to the saltworks at Moolap, and the rest going to the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve, detouring through Port Lonsdale.

Those at Moorlap were thrilled by the sight of thousands of Pied and Banded Stilts - they described the view through the telescopes as a "forest of pink legs". They also saw a few Greenshanks and Avocets.



Those who went to Ocean Grove walked through the ancient area of scrub which, it is believed, has not had a fire through it for 600 years, so it was interesting to see large grass trees with the old leaves reaching right down to the ground. Usually these are burnt away in a fire. Also of interest were hedge wattles which reached the status of small trees, twenty-five feet high and a trunk about six inches through.

After the evening meal slides were shown, some of ferns, mainly of the Otways, and fungi, and general views of the Otways. A talk and slide show on the waders which use the Western half of Port Phillip Bay in their thousands helped to consolidate what we had seen during the afternoon. The evening ended with a short talk and a set of slides on the Orange Bellied Parrot, which also uses the area in Winter.

Next day it was off to Airey's Inlet for an inspection of rock pools. A couple of leaders took a bucket each in which they popped creatures which were collected. At the end of the morning we all gathered around to see what had been found. It included several live shells, a couple of chitons, a small eel and shrimps, all of which were returned to the sea after we had inspected them. There were also a number of seaweeds and the remains of a couple of dead birds, (a Muttonbird and a Penguin). On the rocks we had seen Sea Squirts, lots of the very attractive Neptunes Neck-lace seaweed and the beautiful Waratah Sea Anemones, to say nothing of fish and crabs.

After lunch we went to Angahook forest for a 4km walk (both ways!) to Currawong Falls. A number of birds were seen, including Yellowtailed Black Cockatoos, but far more were heard amongst the thick wattle (in particular) regrowth after the Ash Wednesday fires. Some of the Prickly Moses is already ten feet high. Highlight of the walk, despite the dryness of the forest at this time of year, was the numerous and varied ferns, from the dainty Maidenheads and Coral Ferns, to the King Ferns and Tree Ferns.

Quite a few plants were in flower, mostly tiny ones, like a dainty little Persoonia with fine leaves, but a few deep pink Common Heath were flowering and a couple of almost finished Hyacinth Orchids.

After a well-earned cuppa, it was off home again, after a most enjoyable and interesting weekend. We took part in activities which we certainly can't around around here, and even the two patches of bush visited were quite different in character from our local bush. A beach excursion might be "ordinary" to Geelong Field Nats, but we thoroughly enjoyed the novel experience and learned quite a lot.

*Rt. Muir*



## EXCURSION TO TULLAROOP

A surprising range of plants was seen in flower during the Club's excursion to Tullaroop on February 13th. Most of these were on the now exposed shore.

Several rather large patches of Swamp Goodenia were in flower. It is quite like the Primrose Goodenia found growing in the local forests, but has smaller and duller flowers, and tends to grow in big patches.

Two blue flowered plants were the Mud-mat (*Glossostigma elatinoides*), a tiny plant found in mud areas, and Poison Lobelia, (*Lobelia pratensis*), which is a slender plant, much smaller and less showy than Tall Lobelia.

Two Spike-rushes were flowering. The Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis acuta*) growing to about 15 cm, was, as its name suggests, common. There were carpets of Small Spike-rush (*E. pusilla*). Rushes were also conspicuous. Two notable examples were the rather large Pale Rush (*Juncus* sp "O") and the smaller *J. amabilis*. The introduced sedge, *Cyperus eragrostis* grows very well here too.

The Creeping Knot-weed (*Polygonum prostrata*) is very common around the dam. It has 2 cm flat leaves and small green flower spikes. One of the most interesting of the plants is the Shrub Aster (*Aster subulatus*). It is a small shrubby plant to be found growing in the water. Although specimens in flower were found in the previous week on the other side of the dam, no flowers were discernable on the area visited.

One patch towards the edge of the high water mark was filled with the four-leaf clover-like leaves of Nardoo. Nardoo is a fern, and is notable in that the spores from it were a food for the aborigines.

Chestnut-breasted Shelduck was the commonest bird, the total being many hundreds. The day's list was

Chestnut-breasted Shelduck  
Australian Grebe (rare)  
Hoary-headed Grebe (common)  
Large Black Cormorant  
Grey Teal  
Silver Gull  
Black-fronted Dotterel  
Galah  
Red-rump Parrot  
Willy Wagtail  
Jacky Winter  
Rufous Whistler  
White-plumed Honeyeater  
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike

Great Crested Grebe.  
Coot  
Musk Duck  
Large Pied Cormorant  
Swan  
White-faced Heron  
Masked Lapwing  
Eastern Rosella  
Welcome Swallow,  
Rainbow Bird  
Grey Thrush  
Magpie  
Magpie Lark  
Scissors Grinder.



## NOTES FOR FEBRUARY

**BLACK-EARED CUCKOO** has been seen over several days by B. Perry at Guildford, very early in February. For some time it was seen, sitting on a paddock fence. This is only the second record of this bird for the bird list. The other record was made by the Ballarat Bird observers Club, at Yandoit.

**YELLOW-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO** has been seen at the Kindergarten in Berkeley Street by Elma Kelly. This is the second sighting of this bird over the past few months. The previous record was near Guildford.

**JUVENILE PALLID CUCKOO** was seen along the Kalimna Tourist road on 9/2/88. It had the usual striped cuckoo tail, and was black-streaked about the head.

**OTHER NEW BIRD RECORDS.** Two adult Little Grebe, and three juveniles were seen on the dam at the Red, White and Blue Mine at Muckleford on 2/2/88. A Tree Martin was also seen at the dam.

Dusky Moorhen and juveniles were quite common at the western side of Cairn Curran on 27/1/88, as well as Purple Swamphen and a juvenile Black-fronted Plover. Juvenile Hooded Robins were seen at the large dam on the east side of Muckleford forest on 2/2/88.

A Mistletoe Bird was seen at Glenluce Springs on 23/1/88. It was chased away by Red-browed Firetails.

**ADDITION TO THE PLANT LIST.** Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium Arvense*), was found by I. Higgins, growing at Fryers-town. It is a tall thistle with a large number of rather small prickly thistle flowers. The Bog Club-rush (*Isoplepis fluviatilis*) was found by E. Perkins growing at Hamilton's Crossing. It grows to about 50 cm, and has angled stalks and clusters of brown flowers.

**ITEMS FROM WIRRAKEE.** Masked Owl at Redesdale 25/9/97; Crimson Rosella apparently nesting at Coliban Park, 27/9/87; Peregrine Falcon, Smith's Reef, 18/10/87; Blue Wrens nesting, Fryerstown, 30/10/87; Wedge-tailed Eagle Muckleford Forest, 18/10/87; Eastern Shriketit, Fryers-town, 30/10/87; Reed Warbler, Lyall Glen, Dec 87.

**GREY GERMANDER** (or *Teucrium racemosum*) growing in a pot was shown at the February meeting by I. Higgins. It is a member of the Mint Family, and has showy white flowers with long exerted white curved stamens. Grey Germander grows along the Baringhup-Carisbrook Road..

**EXPLORING MARYBOROUGH & DISTRICT.** This excellent booklet has been produced by Maryborough F.N.C. A copy has been given to the Club and is in the Club library. Retail price is \$4.20.



Queenscliff Bird List 21/22 Feb 1988

Golden Plover	Flocks, Swan and Sand Island
Red-capped Plover	Few, Sand Island
Masked Lapwing	Scattered
Red-necked Stint	Numerous, Sand Island
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Very numerous, large flocks, Sand I.
Tattler	Couple, Sand I.
Greenshank	Several Moolap Salt Works
Avocet	Small numbers at Moolap
Banded Stilt	Huge flocks at Moolap
Pied Stilt	Some at Moolap
Little Egret	Swan I; single bird
Pied Oystercatcher	Swan I.
Swan	Swan Bay. numerous
Silver Gull	As usual
Pacific Gull	Queenscliff and Airey's Inlet
Pelican	Swan I.
Gannet	Airey's Inlet
Short-tailed Shearwater	(Mutton Bird) Airey's Inlet; at sea and one washed up on beach
Fairy Tern	Nesting at Sand I.
Crested Tern	Sand I.
Caspian Tern	Sand I.
Little Black Cormorant	Swan I.
Little Pied Cormorant	Swan I, and Airey's Inlet
Great Cormorant	Swan I.
Pied Cormorant	Swan I.
White-faced Heron	Sand I. and Airey's Inlet
Nankeen Kestrel	Airey's Inlet
Domestic Pigeon	Moolap Salt Works
Maggie	Moolap
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Angahook; several overhead.
Crimson Rosella	Angahook, small flock
Welcome Swallow	Various
Grey Fantail	Angahook
Blue Wren	Angahook
Robin	Pair, Angahook
White-throated Treecreeper	Single, Angahook
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Several, Angahook
White-eared Honeyeater	Several, Angahook
Crescent Honeyeater	Angahook - excellent view, inc juv
New Holland Honeyeater	Angahook, small flock
Eastern Spinebill	Angahook, inc juveniles
Singing Honeyeater	Angahook
Raven	Queenscliff. Little Raven?
Starling	Queenscliff

44 species.

Additional list for Ocean Grove Nature Reserve

White-browed Scrub Wren	New holland Honeyeater
Willy Wagtail	Silvereye
Greenfinch	Restless Flycatcher
Dusky Woodswallows	Striated Pardalote
Redbrowed Finch	

Additional for Angahook - Striated Thornbill



## CITY PLANNING SCHEME

This club made three propositions about the proposed town plan. All three have been accepted.

- (a) That the triangle of land east of the high school, and labelled as high school extension should be included in the Kalimna Reserve.
- (b) That the plan be modified to change the reservation of Kalimna Park Reserve from "Existing Public Open Space" to a reservation that more adequately describes the purpose for which it should be reserved. Kalimna Point to be also included in this category. The golf course will remain as "Existing Public Open Space".
- (c) Kaweka Wildflower Reserve and all land occupied by the Golf Course to be included in the "Landscape Protection Policy Area."

## FLOWERPECKERS AND MISTLETOES

Mistletoes have sticky seeds which ensure that they adhere to the branch they are dropped on after their passage through the gut of flowerpeckers, on which they rely for the propagation of the species. They seem to be the only plants adapted so that the seed is placed exactly where it needs to be if it is to grow.

An observation made in Brunei tells how a flowerpecker, to which Family the Mistletoe Bird belongs, was seen running up and down a telephone wire, rubbing its bottom on the wire. The observer was rather confused by this behaviour until he realised that when this was done on a twig or a branch of a tree the sticky mistletoe seed would be deposited, and firmly stuck, to the place where it was to grow. The annoyance of the seed stuck to the bird's bottom (sic.!) and the surrounding feathers triggered the behaviour which would ensure the germination of the seed and the continuance of the species -not on the telephone wire though!

It would be interesting to see of our own flowerpecker, the Mistletoe Bird, has the same behaviour patterns as the Brunei one in this regard. It would seem very likely. Any observations?



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WESTERN VICTORIAN FIELD NATURALIST CLUBS CAMPOUT.

18th, 19th, 20th March, 1988.

PROPOSED PROGRAM.

- Friday 18th. At Historical Society's Clubrooms, 24 Bank Street, Port  
From 4.30pm. Fairy - next to Tourist Information Office.
- At dusk Observe Mutton Birds. Bring torch.  
Supper.
- Saturday 19th  
Bus Bus available for outing subject to adequate bookings.  
Cost \$5 per adult. Students no charge. Please book seats  
by 11th March with the Secretary, telephone number above  
until 28th February, from 29th with Jack Morse, 055 62 2181.
- 9 a.m. Depart from Tourist Information Centre, corner Raglan  
Parade (Princes Highway) and Kepler Street, for Killarney  
Beach. Observe waders.
- 12 m.d. B.Y.O. lunch at Presbyterian Church Hall, Koroit. Hot  
water, tea, coffee, sugar, milk provided.
- 1.30 p.m. Tower Hill car park. Guided walk of volcanic area.  
Return to Warrnambool by 5 p.m.
- 7.30 p.m. Warrnambool Art Gallery, corner Liebig Street and Timor  
Street, Association General Meeting. Guest Speaker,  
Mr Robert Ulmann, subject "Whales".  
Supper.
- Sunday 20th  
9 a.m. Depart from Tourist Information Centre, warrnambool, car  
convoy to Childers Cove, Sandy Beach, Ralph Illidge  
Sanctuary.
- 12 m.d. Barbecue lunch. B.Y.O. plate, cup, cutlery, meat, or  
order meat when booking bus. All else provided.
- 1.30 p.m. Farewells.
- Accommodation As per brochure. Make own bookings.

A SIMPLE HERBARIUM

After tea at Geelong a number of books were on display, including a "stick-down" type Photo Album, which was full of pressed ferns, showing samples of not only the upper surfaces of the fronds, but the undersides showing the sori, the patterns of which help in identification of ferns, or the spore bearing specially adapted fronds, whichever was appropriate to the species. Some of the specimens were 13 years old, and still in good condition. I couldn't help feeling the idea could be adapted to our local plants, and would be very helpful in identification



## CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. AGENDA

Mar 12-14. V.F.N.C.A. meeting at "Kangarooobie",  
Princeton. Contact Nancy Bryant, RMD 8405, Timboon.

Sat 13th March. SIMPSON DESERT with David Plant. Note  
the changed date to Saturday. 8.00 p.m. at High School.

Sun 14th March. DOWNSTREAM FROM CAIRN CURRAN. Meet S.E.C  
Mostyn St at 1.30 p.m. sharp. Leader is M. Oliver.

Sat 19-Sun 20 Mar. WARRNAMBOOL. W.V.F.N.C.A. campout.

Sat 26 Mar. BROLGA COUNT. E. Perkins has details.

Sat 7-Sun 8th May. MELVILLE CAVES CAMPOUT. Club campout  
at Melville Caves.

Sat 10 Sept. TARNAGULLA. Combined excursion with  
Maryborough and St Arnaud F.N.C..

Sat 1 Oct. BICENTENARY WALK THROUGH KALIMNA  
2.00 pm; meet outside high school (Lawson Pde)

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CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. Inc. P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine 3450.

Committee: George Broadway (Pres), Barbara Maund (Sec),  
Maggie Oliver (VP), Rita Mills (Newsletter), Kay Turner  
(Program Sec), Ern Perkins (Treas), Margaret Dunne,  
Geoff Sitch, Robyn Holden, Gunter Leidl, Elma Kelly.  
Librarian: Lesley Perkins.

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1988

Pensioner/student	\$3	Single	\$5
Family	\$8	Supporting	\$12

Newsletter Posted: Membership subscription plus \$5

## SUPPER ROSTER for 1988

Mar: B. Maund, L. Perkins	Aug: M. Oliver, K. Turner
Apr: P. Shaw, E. Hall	Sep: F. & E. Blake
May: J. Buntine, E. Warne	Oct: G. Sitch, E. Kelly
Jun: B. & T. Collins	Nov: M. & M. Willis
Jul: G. & P. Broadway	