

# The North-Eastern Naturalist

Issue 175 SEPTEMBER 2008.

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**IT IS THE MISSION OF THIS CLUB to encourage the study, appreciation and preservation of our natural and cultural environment, the animals, plants, geology and landforms, including those of the coastal and marine areas in the North East region of Tasmania.**

**The Club conducts outings on the second Saturday of the month.**

## SEPTEMBER 13

### 'THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BUSHWALK' - WYNIFORD RIVER

Meet at Emu Flats Road—beside the Weldborough Pub at 10.30 am. Other people are involved apart from club members, so please be punctual. Five hour's walking on old unused roads. A gradual up-hill walk to the beautiful Wyniford Wier where we will have lunch. Two creek crossings on the way—garbage bags make good waders. Bring warm clothing, lunch and wear sturdy boots. Co-ordinator: Lesley Nicklason  
63 736195 [evenings] 0400557418 [day] Please let Lesley know if you have a spare seat for car pooling.

## OCTOBER 18 [not the usual 2nd Sat]

### THE GEOLOGY OF WEYMOUTH / PIPER'S RIVER AREA.

Meet with other Field Natters from all over Tasmania for this outing led by Henry Shannon. Some will remember an excellent day with Henry in 2005. Meet at Salvation Army Camp, Weymouth and be ready to head to the beach at 9am. Enter Weymouth, first turn on right is Walkden Street, signposted, entrance to camp immed. on right after slight rise. Spend the weekend there ? See next page.....Co-ordinator Lou.

## NOVEMBER 8

### EXPLORING ANSON'S BAY.

Jenny Bicanic will show us her favourite "patches" where she has been observing orchids for twenty years. Easy walking at orchid spotters pace. Bring own lunch. We have been invited to camp—campers need to be self sufficient. Follow all signs to Anson's Bay, turn right into Acacia Road at the bottom of the hill, and left at the next fork into Melaleuca St. Bicanic's is the 5th place on the left. Meet 10am. Contact: Lou.

## DECEMBER 13

### BRIDPORT RAMBLE.

Easy 4km walk in the Granite Point Conservation Area, including parts of the Wildflower Reserve, Frog Lagoon, Adam's Beach and rocky shoreline. Meet at 10am at the Old Pier Beach [signposted] Bring lunch. Co-ordinator : Mike Douglas 63 561 243.

Subs for the year 2008 / 9 became due at the AGM in August, those wishing to renew membership can use the form on the back page and send to the Treasurer.

## Bird Report Waterhouse Conservation Area.

We scored a superb winter's day for the excursion to the Waterhouse Conservation Area. Twenty enthusiasts took advantage of the weather to gather at Blizzard's Landing car park, a mix of young and older. The leader, Mike Douglas, gave an inspired commentary on the history, flora and geology of the area as we followed him through the changing habitat.

Some of the party were interested in the birds present over winter. Off the beach, Crested Terns bombed into the waves and many Pacific Gulls flew along the shore line. Walking up to One Tree Hill we saw Eastern Spinebill, Forest Raven, Grey Fantail, Crescent Honey Eater, Grey Butcherbird and Grey Currawong. The view from the top was sensational, especially when 3 Wedge-tailed Eagles came soaring up from behind the hill to circle lazily around.

We started down the track, sighting a mature White-Bellied Sea Eagle and eventually through the heath to the beach. On the way we spied Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Little Wattlebird, Yellow Wattlebird, Brown Falcon, New Holland Honey Eater and Tawny Crowned Honey Eater. A pair of Welcome Swallows were enjoying the mild winter enough to stay around and were swooping low near the drop off to the beach.

Lunch on the beach added a White Faced Heron, while both adult and juvenile Pacific Gulls flew overhead. We walked back along the rocks to the car park and were lucky enough to see, out on the point, 1 mature and 2 immature White-Bellied Sea Eagles stirring up the roosting Pacific Gulls. No Kelp Gulls were seen.

Altogether, 18 species were present: Eastern Spinebill, Pacific Gull, Forest Raven, Grey Fantail, Crescent Honey Eater, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Grey Currawong, Grey Butcherbird, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Welcome Swallow, Brown Falcon, White-faced Heron, Tawny Crowned Honey Eater, Crested Tern, Little Wattlebird, Yellow Wattlebird, New Holland Honey Eater, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Driving back along Homestead Rd, we stopped a few times and saw Cape Barren Geese, a family of Flame Robins with a male and 5 female or immatures, 7 Banded Lapwings feeding with a flock of Starlings and 4 Brown Falcons spaced out along viewing points on the road. One was sitting on a fence post, so close that we had a wonderful view of the tear-drop markings on the face.

It was a wonderful day and many thanks to all for the company and willingly shared knowledge.

Report by Sue McNiell.  
It was great to have Dee's friends with us, sharing their enthusiasm for our birds. [ed.]

## Climbing St. Patrick's Head. April 2008.

Last time the club planned to climb St. Patrick's Head, the area was experiencing one of its famous "wet days". When these days happen, the area around Grey, St. Mary's and Mt. Elephant – receive huge dumps of rain in really brief periods. Such figures as 508mm in 24 hours have been recorded. It's the intensity of these falls that causes the serious instability in the landscape with flooding and land-sliding.

Cloud covers the mountain-tops in the area for 60% of days, with precipitation rising from the sea and putting St. Mary's and the area to the west in a rain shadow. This means a richness of diversity with less transpiration, the moisture being retained by the plants.

This time, the weather was fine, the group setting off in high spirits, even though the attack was upwards fairly steeply right from the start. Many breathless stops were made to "admire the views". Our eyes and ears were attuned more acutely to the birds on this outing as two visiting U.K. ornithologists put us to shame by recognising our endemic bush birds. Never mind..... an added dimension for us!

Ross and Lou were out ahead turning over rocks searching for the Blind Velvet Worm, *Tasmanipatus anophthalmus*. Living in the forest, deep within rotting logs and soil, the Blind Velvet worm, an unusual 25-35mm caterpillar-like animal with a soft cylindrical body and a velvety appearance, has occasionally been found in piles of dolerite rocks in the St. Mary's area. It has a core distribution on Mt Nicholas through St Patricks Head and Mt Elephant south to Mt Allen. It is at risk from forest clearing and from too frequent and too hot burning. It only has a habitat of 150km<sup>2</sup> and is listed as Endangered.

A fascinating feature of the worm's distribution is its unexpected **parapatry** with the Giant velvet worm *T. barretti*. The two species' ranges meet but do not overlap, along a line from just north of the Chain of Lagoons, to St. Mary's Pass, to the Mt. Nicholas area. Few examples of a line like this have been documented in the world.

The search for the Blind Velvet Worm was in vein, and we soon had to seriously concentrate on our attack of the steep sections of the Head.

At the top we sat on impressive boulders amidst columns of dolerite enjoying 360° views. There was great bonhomie as we ate lunch perched here away from the wind and admiring the stoicism of six year old Tommy, who was full of good spirit amongst twenty or so complete strangers.

The cheerful friendly atmosphere of the day was extended afterwards as we sat together enjoying Pam's hospitality at the Pancake Barn.

## Waterhouse Conservation Area.

The Waterhouse Conservation Area has high scenic value, with tall dunes, beaches, rocky shorelines and expanses of coastal heath and shrub-land.

There is a range of northeastern coastal ecosystems - good examples of several dry sclerophyll and heath communities, including the most extensive area of *Danthonia* [wallaby grass] / *Leocopogon parviflorus* [Coast Beard Heath] heath-land in Tasmania. The heaths have high species diversity. There are many threatened plant species.

The reserve has several wetlands, which are important waterbird habitats. One of them, Little Waterhouse Lake is on the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance.

The extensive dune fields are of geomorphological significance in determining past landscape development and climatic changes in the area. Significant aboriginal sites are present.

On the June outing, a group of twenty members examined some of these features during a six kilometre walk - starting at Blizzard's Landing, then crossing the One Tree Hill and proceeding via Vaughn's Track to the coast.

Boots were sprayed with methylated spirits to reduce the risk of spreading the root-rot fungus, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, which is present in parts of the area. Recently, another fungal disease, Xanthorrhoea Crown Rot, caused by an air-borne fungus, *Fusarium subglutinans*, was found in grass trees - mainly in a recently burnt part of the reserve.

A few years ago, much of the One Tree Hill and surrounds was burned by arsonists. On the rocky dolerite slopes, dense regeneration was seen, including *Melaleuca ericifolia* [Swamp Paperbark], *Hibbertia sericea* [Silky Guineaflower], *Pultenaea daphnoides* [Native Daphne], *Goodenia ovata* [Parrot's Food], *Monotoca elliptica* [Tree Broom Heath], *Allocasuarina verticillata* [Drooping Sheoak] and *Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia* [Rock Fern].

Near the top of the hill, as we crossed one of the linear, vegetated Pleistocene dunes, there was a sudden transition to an open heathy vegetation that included *Acacia suaveolens* [Sweet Scented Wattle], *Aotis ericoides* [Golden Pea], *Leocopogon ericoides* [Pink Beard Heath], *Xanthorrhoea australis* [Tall Grass Tree], *Allocasuarina monolifera* [Dwarf Oak], *Lepidosperma concavum* [Sand Sword Sedge], and a few dwarfed eucalypts viz. *E. amygdalina* [Black Peppermint], *E. viminalis* [White Gum], and *E. pauciflora* [Cabbage Gum or White Sallee].

During the last glacial phase [approx. 29,000 to 12,000 years ago], the sea level dropped by 120 metres and the waters of Bass Strait were reduced to a central lake.

Much of the strait and present coastal zone of the Northeast was cold, arid and windswept. Vast sand deposits on the former sea-bed were blown into very long linear dunes—which we see today in 'fossilised' form.

Dunes and sand sheets now seen closer to the coast are of the Holocene Age [i.e. 10,000 years ago to the present], and were formed from sands coming ashore after the sea level rose again.

At nearby Waterhouse Marsh, pollen grain studies, allied with carbon 14 dating, revealed an interesting sequence of climatic and vegetational changes over the past 11,000 years.  
Waterhouse Conservation Area continued.....

At the start of the Holocene the area changed from open grassland, with species now found at high altitude, to eucalypt forest - indicative of warming temperatures and more rainfall. At about 6,500 years ago, the grassy understorey was replaced by woody shrubs—possibly indicating loss of soil fertility caused by

podsolisation [leaching of upper layers]. Pollen of *Nothofagus*, washed down from the hinterland, indicate a phase of rainforest advance in the Northeast beginning prior to 6,500 BP.

At 6,000 BP, there was a marked loss of eucalypt forest. This coincided with the stabilization of Bass Strait at present sea levels and also the occupation of the area by Aborigines. A combination of burning and salt-laden winds may explain this sudden transition to open heathland.

At the dolerite coast we were dismayed to see incursions of *Euphorbia paralias* [Sea Spurge] into denuded surfaces behind the dunes. Great, wind-pruned banks of *Alyxia buxifolia* [Sea Box] occur on this coast together with the usual species such as *Carpobrotus rossii* [Pigface], *Disphyma crassifolium* [Round-leaved Pigface], *Tetragonia implexicoma* [Ice Plant], *Sarcocornia quinqueflora* [Glasswort], and *Muehlenbeckia adpressa* [Lignum].

A dwarfed spreading form of *Leptospermum lanigerum* [Woolly Tea Tree] occurs here, tangled up with *Selliera radicans* [Shiny Swamp Mat] and *Cassytha glabella* [Slender Dodder Laurel], a parasite.

Story and map by Mike Douglas.

## Discovering Aplysia

This story is about the discovery of sea hares at Little Musselroe Bay in Easter 2008 when Leila, my daughter, came down to visit for a couple of days.

On our first evening we walked up the lagoon to where the river empties into the lagoon, then on up beside the river. It was a still evening, the wet sand of the lagoon reflected the low light, oyster catchers called with irritation at our intrusion, black swan watched us warily as we skirted the edge of the lagoon. The stillness made our walk seem reverential, our voices were quiet as we noted signs in the sand, and birds feeding on the lagoon.

Numerous tracks of wallabies criss-crossed the wet sand, we gasped in awe at the giant tracks of a forester that had passed a short time before and worried about dog tracks unaccompanied by humans, the fox?

A rare special evening, so quiet, even the sounds of birds gathering for the night in the coastal scrub seemed muted. We walked beside the river noting the thick algal growth covering the bottom, schools of tiny fish broke the surface as they shot from the shallows heading for deeper water. A white faced heron rose from the river edge with harsh grating voice and ungainly flight.

A short distance up the river we found a horrid purplish fleshy lump left by the tide, then another and another, some still pulsating, slowly dying amongst the crab shells and sea weed. My first reaction was fear that yet another invader of our seas had reached the north east. As we walked on further looking into the still water of the river, we observed in the dying light, large, varied coloured slugs, eating trails in the algae. They were about 120 mm long with wings of flesh that folded over their backs, two fleshy ear like feelers rose from the top of their heads, two more waved out from the front.

We picked up one of the fleshy lumps from beside the river, assuming it was a slug stranded by the outgoing tide and walked back to the camp, to see if we could find out about this creature.

Once we had lit the lamps we were quickly able to find some information in Graeme Edgar's book *Australian Marine Life*. They were sea hares, often found in estuaries in autumn when they come in to breed. They receive their common name from the rolled tentacles (rhinophores) that rise like ears from the top of their head. Each animal lays thousands of eggs in long spaghetti like threads. They are hermaphrodites, and can form chains of animals, each individual acting as male to the animal in front and female to the one in the rear. Their life cycle is only one year, and all are thought to be herbivorous, feeding on seaweeds, sea grass and blue green algae. Most sea hares release a purple ink when threatened.

Next morning we headed off with camera to photograph them. We were excited to see what they looked like in daylight. Another warm still day. When we reached the river we began to peer through the still water examining the bottom of the river, and there they were, ploughing through the algae. Most were brown with darker lines running over the surface, a couple were black and one white, no longer were they horrid and foreign, but graceful even beautiful moving slowly through the weed, their tentacles waving gently. Some were joined together mating, the top sea hare's head and neck embraced by the wings of the lower sea hare. We were unable to see the threads of eggs but maybe we just didn't recognise them as such, and they didn't release any ink, but maybe we weren't threatening enough.

I am still unsure of the species but think it might be *Aplysia sydneyensis*, the other likely candidate is *Aplysia juliana* which doesn't release ink when threatened but has a sucker at its posterior end and moves rather like a leech. I would appreciate any information that others have that would help me identify them.



riv-

Sea hare  
found dying  
er bank.



on

Two sea hare seen amidst the algae.

## Dawn at Birralelee

by Sarah Lloyd

*"Until we better understand diel patterns in signalling, such as the dawn chorus, we will not fully understand why birds sing".*  
(Staicer et al 1996).

"Night owls" may shudder at the thought of a project that involves getting up with the birds, but there's a particular beauty in the pre-dawn day. As I listen to the last nocturnal hootings of the resident owls and watch as the Southern Cross and the waning moon fade with the increasing glow on the eastern horizon, and the rising sun colours wispy clouds pink then brilliant red, I think about how fortunate I am to live in a place where I can step outside my front door and listen to the dawn chorus; surely one of nature's wonders and one that has been very little studied, not just in Australia, but anywhere.

I have based my project on a study undertaken by Allen Keast in 1985 called "Springtime song, Periodicity and Sequencing, a comparison of a southern forest and Northern Woodland Bird Community". Keast documented a week of dawn singing at the beginning of the breeding season at a eucalypt forest on the Hawkesbury River, NSW and a eucalypt woodland on the south Alligator River, NT, but restricted his research to sunny, windless days in spring. In the northern hemisphere, however, studies have shown that weather conditions, especially wind, rain and light intensity, influence the starting times and intensity of singing so I was determined to ascertain the impact of these conditions and started monitoring the dawn singing regardless of the weather.

I soon found that prevailing weather conditions did affect the starting times of each species' songs as well as the audible range. On still misty mornings I hear roosters crowing, magpies carolling and kookaburras laughing from the cleared farmland about a kilometre away while the audible range on windy days is reduced to approximately 80 meters. This encompasses the dense habitats where most of the resident passerines, the main focus of my study, roost for the night and remain to greet the day with song.

The project involves listening to and documenting the simultaneous singing of the resident birds (often referred to as the dawn chorus) once, twice and sometimes three times a week. The singing starts from between 30 to 60 minutes before sunrise, depending on the time of year, and continues until there is a noticeable lull, usually when the sun comes up. I make a minute by minute note of what bird species are singing, their location, and the time of their first and subsequent songs. I later transfer this information onto a daily excel data sheet. For the many forest birds with extensive vocal repertoires I also note the song type used at dawn. For example, prior to and during the breeding season the Yellow-throated Honeyeater would start the day with its distinctive three note song, occasionally followed by its slow trill and/or "tonk" calls. By the time breeding had ceased in mid-January, I heard only its warble at dawn.

Here, as in the rest of the world, birds usually sing in a set daily sequence. When I started the project in late August the beautiful fluty song of the Bassian Thrush heralded the dawn at 6:05, 30 minutes before sunrise, and five minutes passed before I heard the ravens' baritone "kaarr". By 6:15 Tasmanian Scrubwrens had joined the refrain followed by the Yellow-throated Honeyeater, the strident song of the Strong-billed Honeyeater (a sound it only makes at dawn) then the Eastern Spinebill and Pink Robin. Not only did this sequence remain almost constant for the first few weeks, but if I documented the dawn chorus on consecutive days, species would start singing at exactly the same minute each morning.

More surprises were in store: although I have lived at Black Sugarloaf for 16 years and was confident that I could identify every species by their calls, by the third morning I'd heard not one but two mystery sounds. One, a haunting owl-like hawl, I ascribed to the Southern Boobook which would be hooting softly as I started each day's listening. That the eerie hawl was interspersed with soft boobook-like phrases seemed good reason for this attribution but until I'd actually seen the bird emit the song I wouldn't be convinced.

Fortunately (or unfortunately depending on how tired I'm feeling), even on those mornings when I decide to stay in bed I can hear the birds from the bedroom. Early one morning I woke to the sound of the mystery call so I leapt out of bed, put on my boots and ventured to the gully, the early morning gloom just enough to light my way. High in a tree the aforementioned sound emanated from the distinctive silhouette of a Grey Currawong and immediately confirmed the misidentification. The singer of the second mystery sound, best described as a mournful warble, remained unidentified for several months. I have now confirmed that it is another crepuscular call of the diurnally "clinking" currawong adding yet another song type to the remarkably diverse repertoire of this bird.

During the third week of September I witnessed the passage over several mornings of numerous small flocks of migrating Silvereyes. While most continued on their southerly path, close to forty returned to their breeding territories in the dense vegetation in nearby gullies and I must admit to feeling a little ambivalent about their return. Silvereyes are accomplished mimics and for several mornings after first arriving one would sing loudly from a nearby wattle tree. Perfect renditions of the songs of Golden Whistlers, Grey Shrike-thrushes and Green Rosellas emanated from this little bird. When heard during the day, the imitative songs of a solitary singing silvereye alternate with its distinctive warbling and are obviously coming from one source. But at dawn, when many different species are singing continuously and simultaneously, the imitations are more difficult to differentiate. The loud song of the resident Blackbird, another skilled mimic, only added to the cacophony of confusion.

The propensity of birds to sing more intensively at dawn than during the rest of the day has been the subject of much theorizing. There are probably many factors contributing to this phenomenon including environmental conditions such as reduced air turbulence that may facilitate the transmission of sound and social functions including mate attraction and territorial advertising. In addition, intensive dawn singing may serve a function intrinsic to the singer's internal state.

Light levels affect the beginning and ending of a bird's day and thus influence the time they start singing. As the summer solstice approached birds began singing correspondingly earlier. In late August when I began the project Grey Fantails, though present in the area, were silent at dawn, by September they were making a minor contribution and by October 17<sup>th</sup> they had taken over the lead, starting at 4:29, (Eastern Standard Time) 52 minutes before sunrise and well before most other birds. By December 9<sup>th</sup> one bird in the eastern gully introduced the singing at 3:30 and four other birds immediately responded. Despite the presence of fledglings, which indicated that breeding had ceased, this pattern persisted until January 19<sup>th</sup>, but by the 22<sup>nd</sup> they were all but silent again.

Why the Grey Fantails' contribution to the dawn singing has changed both in intensity and timing, and other species have at times dominated and later dropped out of the dawn chorus may be related to their internal states. Not only do increasing levels of the sex hormone testosterone (triggered by increasing day length and light intensity) stimulate singing, but in many species the production of testosterone and the growth of their reproductive organs are stimulated by the songs of both conspecific birds and a bird's own vocalisation. In many species singing peaks at the time when females are fertile and laying eggs.

With the approach of autumn and the cessation of the mating season, birds are spending more time foraging than singing, intent on building up fat reserves to prepare for their migration flights or in readiness for winter. And although birds are occasionally vocalising during the day, many are silent at dawn and those that are still singing are doing so softly and less frequently.

Like any such study many questions have arisen and I can envisage the project continuing for some years, if for no other reason than to experience the tranquillity of the still early mornings and to hear and occasionally glimpse the elusive Owllet Nightjar.

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Sunrise times at Black Sugarloaf (Lat 41° 23' Long 146°48') were obtained from the website:  
[www.ga.gov.au/geodesy/astro/sunrise](http://www.ga.gov.au/geodesy/astro/sunrise).

## **Club News.**

### **Two Indoor Meetings.**

Our two indoor 'events' this year proved a great success. The first, hosted by Jill was filled with eating and drinking and armchair 'outings'. These came in the form of the latest DVD's lent to us by Jeff Jennings, and picture shows by Lesley and Ross.

We sat back and watched as Jeff trudged through the Cradle Mountain National Park in the rain; we went with Ross on one of Revel's expeditions this time to Schouten Island; then we visited Lesley's favourite spots in the North East. It was a great way to travel!

Thanks, Jill for stepping in at the last minute with an alternative venue.

The AGM in August was graciously hosted by Joy Rayner and attended by twenty members. After we had got the meeting out of the way and eaten a sumptuous lunch, we listened fascinated to Sarah Lloyd and Ron Nagorcka as they informed and entertained with bird calls, music, wonderful pictures of and information about Tasmanian birds.

So intent were we on listening and learning from Ron and Sarah that to take notes would have been impossible. Sarah has though, given permission for the reprinting of one of her pieces about the dawn chorus, which she mentioned during her talk.

Thank you to Joy for opening her house and garden. Joy had also spread some of her collection of books out for us to enjoy, and many did!

### **Thankyou Ross Coad.**

I think we were so conscious of making our AGM a short one, that we omitted a very important comment.

Ross Coad who has been President of the club since 2004, stepped down from the position. During his time in office, he set himself a couple of tasks, which would 'formalise' the running of the club and address the safety issues which had been bothering us for some time.

The results of his work are the member guidelines and a formalised membership form which is completed by each new member and updated by ongoing members each year. This attempt to minimise risk was introduced in 2007 and is working quite well. The club purchased a first aid kit which is carried on every outing.

Thanks to Ross for his leadership of and commitment to the club in carrying out these tasks.

### **Federation Weekend-Get together**

If anyone is interested in spending the weekend at Weymouth on October 17, 18,19, please let Lou know. It is \$8/ night to stay at the Camp. Friday night's talk will be "Caving in Tasmania", then after the outing on Sat. the meal will be at the Tam-O-Shanter Golf Club—\$17. There will also be another activity on Sunday.

### **Dam Threat.**

One of the issues which is concerning many in the North East is the proposed damming of the Boobyalla River *Eucalyptus ovata* tract and the Scout Cabin and Pearly Brook area on the Forester River.

Mike Douglas, the club's Vice President, has guided hundreds of people through the area in an attempt to build community awareness. He opposes the destruction of these areas, and suggests that the club should be prepared to make a submission when the scheme is eventually announced.

His motion promoted a lot of discussion at the AGM, mostly around what the club should actually DO. It was decided that a letter should be written seeking clarification about the proposal and expressing concern.

Legislation passed by Parliament in April 2007 removed the usual environmental checks on dam construction. Indeed, the Primary Industry Minister, has publicly avowed that no conservation group will be allowed to get in the way of dam construction.

"A six member Assessment Committee for Dam Construction chosen by the Primary Industry Minister has enormous power and there will be no appeals mechanism against the decisions made by them.

Forest Practices regulations have been altered to remove vegetation clearing for dams from within the jurisdiction of the Forest Practices Authority. It was this authority which in the past invoked the conservation provisions within the Regional Forest Agreement to stop the dam."\*

Is it possible that this RFA protection remains?

\*Mike Douglas in his letter to the club.

### **Cat Control Forum**

Over the past 12 months the Australian Government has funded five community cat control projects in Tasmania. The Threatened Species Network has been involved with three projects. Places like King Island, Bruny Island and Little Swanport have had programmes running for three years. There is a lot of interest in expanding this work

### **Contributions to newsletter.**

Thanks to Deny for this snippet.

In the St. Vincent's and the Spencer Gulfs in South Australia, is a phenomenon of the sea which only occurs in two other places in the world. It occurs when the sea dodges its normal tidal rhythm and drops to a level about mid-way between high and low water and ceases to ebb and flow for a period of three tides. These dodge tides occur about five or six times a year and are not to be confused with neap tides. The two other places where dodge tides occur are the Gulf of Mexico and along the North African Coast.

Thanks also to Dee for her wonderful story about discovering the sea hare at Little Musselroe.

And please....if other members could write about an experience or an observation or a trip somewhere, it certainly would add a more personal touch to our newsletter.