

The North-Eastern Naturalist

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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.

FEBRUARY 14

WATERHOUSE LAKES.

Looking at freshwater invertebrates and plants at Little Waterhouse Lake in the morning, lunch and a swim [if desired] at the beach, then visit one of the other lakes in the afternoon. Bring any reference books you may have; meet at 10am at the junction of Waterhouse and Homestead Roads [signposted] approximately 27kms from Bridport.

Contact: Lou Brooker 6356 0381

MARCH 14

SKEMPS FIELD STUDY CENTRE - MYRTLE PARK.

We will spend the day exploring the many tracks in this 'reserve' - short walks through many different habitats, all graded easy to medium. Meet 10am at the turn-off to Skemps [signposted] on the Tasman Highway at Targa about 5km from the foot of the Sideling. Contact : Lou Brooker 6356 0381.

APRIL 18

RIVER WALK - KIM AND PETER EASTMAN'S - NORTH SCOTTS-DALE.

A day which will be of particular interest to families with children with a leisurely walk through different forest types and beside the Forester River. [maybe even **in** the river] Meet 10am at corner of Tasman Highway and North Scottsdale Road [in the town]

Contact : Jill van den Bosch 6352 3004.

news and reports

Apology from the Editor.

Its not much of a newsletter is it ? It'll probably win the prize for the smallest ever. Never mind, I'll do my best to record a few brief reports of our activities, and then I might just do what Charles Taylor [bless his soul] used to do—present some photocopied snippets that may be of interest. So here goes....

Oh, and best wishes for an interesting and stimulating 2009 for all members.

The Great Australian Bushwalk. 13. 09. 08.

On September 13th 30 people took part in the annual Great Australian Bushwalk. The GABW is organised State-wide by the Tasmanian National Parks Association and is supported by Wildcare. Statewide, seven walks were enjoyed by a total of 112 people. This year's walk in the North East was to the Wyniford River which has its headwaters on the Blue Tier and joins the Ringarooma River out past Gladstone in the far northeast. This walk started at Emu Flats near Weldborough - a magnificent area of tall wet eucalypt forest with rainforest understorey. Crossing the Frome River we climbed gradually up through myrtle, blackwood, sassafras, mountain pepper and tea-tree until we reached the Wyniford Weir, our lunch-spot.

The weir is described here in an extract from Greg Jackman's archaeological survey.

“.....In 1908 the Pioneer Co. switched from steam power to electricity and work was started on the Frome Dam, designed to supply water to the company power station nestled in a steep valley below, 4km southeast of the township of Moorina. In order to supplement the flow into the dam in Feb 1910 a new race easement was applied for - diverting 5 sluice-heads of water from the Wyniford race in a south-westerly direction into the head of the Frome River. Later that month a lease on one acre at the race intake was applied for in order to enable the construction of a weir cross the Wyniford River to further regulate the water supply. The Weir projects 11 meters into the river from the north bank before angling sharply to the west to become the intake for the Pioneer Co. race. The Weir is formed from large horizontally laid celery top pine logs stacked against a series of upright pine posts driven into holes excavated into the river bed-rock. The Weir diverts the river flow into a 2m wide concrete flume which in turn leads into a stone lined channel running around the south bank above the river before turning south-west towards the Frome River. The Wyniford Weir constitutes a highly visible and informative part of the Blue Tier's cultural landscape”.

Report by Lesley

ps.....all the forest surrounding Emu Flat Road is earmarked for clearfell logging and the Wyniford River for damming....too depressing really !!

Federation Weekend : Weymouth / Pipers River.

Nine members began the day along with field natters from all over the state, on the foreshore at Weymouth where Henry Shannon an avid geologist, local inhabitant and our leader for the day, told us the stories of the rock formations only recently revealed after being covered by sand for ages.

Our club will have its turn hosting a state get-together such as this one in spring this year; hopefully we can book the Field Study Centre and visit the sites we had planned to visit just after the fires in 2006, when it was our turn to host last time.

Exploring Anson's Bay. 09. 11. 08

Twenty millimetres of rain was very welcome, locally, at Ansons Bay on Saturday, 8th November but somewhat of a dampener for Field Nat. travellers. But an enthusiastic Rosemary Cavanaugh arrived at 8.30am with welcome newspapers and the makings for breakfast for Jill van den Bosch, Jenny Bicanic and campers, Lou Brooker and Dee Mills. (Thank you Rosemary)

Several showers later, Jill and Ron Harris, Mike Douglas and Nita McCauley appeared out of the mist. Nine intrepid Field Nats, dressed snugly in wet weather gear, ventured up the edge of the river to enjoy the serendipity of local flora and bird life.

It was back to the shack for a leisurely lunch, although an upset table was a shock for some! The skies cleared as we walked the fire trails, bush-bashed across a hill to see a large granite rock decoratively covered with rock orchids and then back to base along the edge of the Bay.

Although a dry winter and early spring has had some effect on the variety of orchid species, we did find ten different flowering orchids. The *Diurus sulphurea* (donkey orchid) were abundant on a bank on the very edge of the Bay and random in many other areas. Buds of *Dipodium roseum* (hyacinth orchid) were also common. The stately *Pterostylis nutans* (nodding greenhood) was, disappointingly, the only greenhood we saw. A few *Aci-anthus caudatus* (mayfly orchid), *Glossodia major* (waxlip orchid), *Cyrtostylis robusta* (large gnat orchid) and *Chiloglottis grammata* (small bird orchid) were at the end of their seasons. *Dockrilla striolata* (rock orchid) was seen in various settings including on the steep rock faces of the river bank by Jill and Jenny as they canoed up the Ansons River on Friday. The onion orchid was probably *Microtis arenaria* (notched) and while we found many *Thelymitra* buds, some of them obviously different to each other, the overcast conditions denied our identifying them. Leaves of *Chiloglottis reflexa* (autumn bird), *Corybas* (helmet) and *Pyrorchis nigricans* (red beaks) were also observed so it was quite a successful day for the orchid enthusiasts. Report by Jenny Bicanic.

Bridport Ramble. 14. 12. 08.

Mike made a wise decision to delay the outing for a day, as the storms of Saturday would not have made for comfortable rambling. Sunday turned out to be quite a different story, though.

The cars were left at the old pier beach and the walk took in some of the lesser known areas of the wildflower reserve, and through what would normally be the wetter areas down to the 'wetlands' behind the dunes at Adams Beach. Lunch was eaten on the rocks and the return to cars was along the foreshore.

Mike is very proud, and rightly so too, of the effect that some of his strategically placed barriers have had on motorbike "hoons". The disrespect for these habitat places is one of the most worrying problems in the North East, and Mike is one person who turns these concerns into actions. Goodonya Mike !!

I came across some interesting research by Dr. Alistair Hobday in the February edition of the Tasmanian Conservationist. Below are some excerpts.....

Recent research

We recently completed a three-year study to determine the frequency and distribution of roadkill on major Tasmanian roads, and are now completing the analyses. Our survey vehicle was equipped with a GPS to record the location and speed of the vehicle every time a roadkill was encountered, and roadkill items were identified without stopping the vehicle or removing the roadkill. We undertook over 150 journeys of an average of 100km between 2001 and 2004 (>15,000km total) in five general areas radiating from Hobart, and repeated routes every season.

The average density of roadkill was one carcass every 2.7km. This rate is higher than reports from NSW, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. Higher density areas may exist but, at the scale of this study, Tasmania is an unenviable leader in roadkill.

The highest average density of roadkill was observed for the Tasman Peninsula (almost one animal every 2km), and the lowest was the Midlands (almost one animal every 4km). On some individual journeys we observed a density of over one carcass per kilometre for a 100km journey.

We recorded over 50 different taxa, ranging from wombats and wallabies to bandicoots and bettongs. A total of 32 bird and two reptile species were included in this total.