



# North-Eastern Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

## The North Eastern Naturalist

Newsletter of the NE Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club

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MISSION STATEMENT: 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.

**From the Editor:** This is the Christmas supplement to the December issue of the North Eastern Naturalist. It consists of material that is unrelated, or only indirectly related to our monthly activities.

The first article, by Mike Douglas, is supplementary to the article in the December issue describing our November activity, a walk to the summit of Mt Maurice. The appendix to Mike's article consists of a list of the names of species identified by Alex Buchanan, who led the walk up

Mt Maurice.

The second article congratulates two northern Tasmanian environmentalists (one of whom is a member of NE Fields Nats) on receiving awards at the national level.

Finally I've added the URLs of some articles available over the internet that may be of interest.

I hope everyone enjoys a relaxing Christmas, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our first outing for 2019, which will be on the second Saturday in February (details still to be decided).

### THE MOUNT MAURICE RESERVE – PAST AND PRESENT

Article and photo by Mike Douglas

Editorial note: Our November activity was a walk to the summit of Mt Maurice. This was described in an article by Alex Buchanan in the December issue (No. 203) of the North Eastern Naturalist. Following the walk, Mike Douglas gave a short talk about the Mt Maurice Reserve. This article provides a summary of Mike's talk.

The Mt Maurice Forest Reserve, initially of 3600 hectares, was created by the Forestry Commission in 1979. Their prime objective was to conserve a significant remnant of a once more extensive northeastern rainforest. Water catchment protection and recreational values were other factors.

In 1986 the Scottsdale office of the commission prepared a management plan for the reserve. Walking tracks to Mt Scott and Mt Maurice (the track we used to reach the summit in early December) were prepared by forester and member of NE Field Nats, Sean Blake.

The reserve was initially restricted to the high country of the Mt Maurice plateau and Mt Scott. In 2012 it was extended to cover more of the eastern and northern slopes, including Cuckoo Falls.



**The broad summit dome of Mt Maurice**

Management passed from the forest service to the Parks and Wildlife Service, and it was renamed the Mt Maurice Regional Reserve.

Before European settlement, Aborigines burned parts of the area, including the summit precinct, during seasonal journeys across the massif to the coast. This fire regime perpetuated eucalypt forest, scrub and open plains. Since the cessation of Aboriginal burning nearly 200 years ago, rainforest has extended its range.

In 1852, surveyor James Scott made an exploratory journey from Diddleum Plains across Mt Maurice and down the valley of the Ringarooma River. He named the summit after a companion, the bushman John Maurice. Later, Scott made his route into a bridle track, but it received little use.

Less well known is that Ronald Campbell Gunn, whose bronze statue can be seen in City Park, crossed the massif to the coast in 1848. The route he used is a matter of conjecture.

Around 1900, fires were often lit on the Maurice High Plains and cattle were driven up from the Ringarooma area for summer grazing, probably via James Scott's track.

Stock was also taken up the Hogarth Rivulet valley to McLennans Hill on a route that is now part of the Cuckoo Falls track (which was also established by Sean Blake).

A good introduction to this reserve on Scottsdale's doorstep is the short walk up Mt Scott, for which an information sheet is available at the Scottsdale Art Gallery Café.

## APPENDIX: SPECIES LIST FOR THE MT MAURICE RESERVE

Alex Buchanan, who led the November walk to the summit of Mt Maurice, subsequently compiled the following list of species (with common names in parentheses) he saw in the Mt Maurice Reserve.

### Summit area:

*Baeckea gunniana* (alpine baeckea)  
*Richea sprengeioides* (rigid candle heath)  
*Richea scoparia* (scoparia, alpine richea)  
*Westringia rubiifolia* (sticky westringia)  
*Oxylobium ellipticum* (shaggy-pea, common rosemary)  
*Astelia alpina* (pineapple grass)  
*Leucopogon pilifer* (trailing beardheath)  
*Empodisma minus* (spreading rope-rush)  
*Lycopodium fastigiatum* (mountain club moss)  
*Tetratheca procumbens* (spreading pinkbells)  
*Eucalyptus archeri* (alpine cider gum)  
*Melaleuca squamea* (swamp honey myrtle)  
*Epacris gunnii* (coral health)  
*Oreobolus distichus* (fan tuft-rush)  
*Poa gunnii* (Tasmanian snow grass)  
*Leptospermum lanigerum* (woolly tea-tree)  
*Persoonia muelleri* (Mueller's geebung)  
*Orites revolutus* (narrow-leaf orites)  
*Gahnia grandis* (cutting grass)  
*Gleichenia dicarpa* (pouched coral fern)  
*Pultenaea juniperina* (prickly beauty)

### Rainforest:

*Nothofagus cunninghamii* (myrtle, myrtle beech)  
*Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* (celerytop pine)  
*Tasmannia lanceolata* (Tasmanian pepperberry)  
*Dicksonia antarctica* (manfern)  
*Telopea truncata* (Tasmanian waratah)  
*Lycopodium fastigiatum* (mountain club moss)  
*Histiopteris incisa* (bat's wing fern)

### Wet sclerophyll forest:

*Eucalyptus delegatensis* (white-top stringy bark)  
*Tasmannia lanceolata* (Tasmanian pepperberry)  
*Coprosma nitida* (currant bush, prickly bush)  
*Persoonia muelleri* (Mueller's geebung)  
*Pultenaea juniperina* (prickly beauty)  
*Coprosma hirtella* (coffee berry)  
*Leptecophylla juniperina* (cheeseberry, mountain pink berry)  
*Pittosporum bicolor* (cheesewood, banyalla)  
*Olearia argophylla* (musk)  
*Blechnum nudum* (fishbone water fern)  
*Dicksonia antarctica* (manfern)  
*Nothofagus cunninghamii* (myrtle, myrtle beech)  
*Pteridium esculentum* (bracken fern)  
*Hydrocotyle* sp.  
*Poa gunnii* (Tasmanian snow grass)  
*Acacia dealbata* (silver wattle)  
*Polystichum proliferum* (mother shield fern)  
*Viola hederacea* (native violet)  
*Lagenophora stipitata* (blue bottle-daisy)  
*Phyllocladus aspleniifolius* (celerytop pine)  
*Leptinella filicula* (mountain cotula)  
*Dianella tasmanica* (Tasmanian flax-lily)  
*Cardamine* sp. (bittercress)  
*Chiloglottis* sp. (bird orchid)



**Myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) among the silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) in the wet sclerophyll forest – Lou Brooker**

## TWO NORTHERN TASMANIANS RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARDS

This year two prominent northern Tasmanian environmentalists, Todd Dudley and Sarah Lloyd, received awards at the national level.

### 1. Todd Dudley, Peter Rawlinson Award

Editorial Note: The following is a brief summary of the award announcement by the Australian Conservation Foundation. Full details are available at: [https://www.acf.org.au/todd\\_dudley\\_wins\\_rawlinson\\_award](https://www.acf.org.au/todd_dudley_wins_rawlinson_award)

Todd Dudley, President of the North East Bioregional Network Inc. and a member of NE Field Nats, has won the 2018 Australian Conservation Foundation's Peter Rawlinson Award in recognition of 20 years of protecting and restoring ecologically-significant landscapes in north-eastern Tasmania.



Devastation following the harvesting of radiata pine plantation and hot ecological burn – photo by Todd Dudley

Among many other achievements, Todd led the Skyline Tier Ecological Restoration project, in which he and a team of 18 locals restored bushland to the hills overlooking Scamander, where forest had been cut down in the 1960s and '70s and turned into a pine plantation.

In a huge restoration effort, Todd and his team brought back biodiverse native forest using seeds that had survived in the ground under the pines.

NE Field Nats congratulates Todd on his award and on his 20 years of superb conservation work in north-eastern Tasmania.



Six years later the devastation has been replaced by biodiverse native forest – photo by Todd Dudley

## 2. Sarah Lloyd, Australian Natural History Medallion

Editorial Note: The following is a brief summary of an article written by Patricia Ellison, President of Central North Field Naturalists, about Sarah's award.

Sarah Lloyd, who is a member of Central North Field Naturalists, is the 2018 recipient of the Australian Natural History Medallion, which is awarded annually by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria in recognition of services to Australian natural history during the previous ten years.

Among many contributing factors towards winning this award, Sarah was a member of the Conservation Committee of Birdlife Tasmania and is recognised for her expertise on bush and forest birds. In 2008 she initiated 'A Sound Idea', at that time an innovative approach to monitoring bush birds using digital sound recording devices.



*Alwysia lloydiae* (Black Sugarloaf), a new species of slime mould, was named in honour of Sarah Lloyd, this year's winner of the Australian Natural History Medallion – photo by Sarah Lloyd

Sarah is also a member of Fungimap, and has registered 1699 records since 2001. Currently, she is a member of the team preparing the second edition of Fungimap's field guide to Australian fungi: 'FUNGI DOWN UNDER, the Fungimap Guide to Australian Fungi'.

Sarah has also conducted original research on slime moulds, and her observations have increased the number of slime mould species known to occur in Tasmania from 42 to 115.

NE Field Nats congratulates Sarah on her wonderful achievements leading to such a prestigious award.

### FURTHER READING - ARTICLES OF POTENTIAL INTEREST

Some or all of the following articles may be of interest to our members and other field naturalists:

**Grass trees aren't a grass (and they're not trees):**

<https://theconversation.com/grass-trees-arent-a-grass-and-theyre-not-trees-100531>

**Notice of auction of some of James Scott's possessions:**

<https://www.invaluable.co.uk/auction-lot/james-scott-1810-1884-a-surveyor-of-van-dieme-A4F431B96E>

**Catastrophic decline in Tas waterfowl (media release):**

[http://www.birdlife.org.au/images/uploads/branches/documents/TAS-BirdLife\\_Tasmania\\_MR\\_11Mar18\\_Waterfowl.pdf](http://www.birdlife.org.au/images/uploads/branches/documents/TAS-BirdLife_Tasmania_MR_11Mar18_Waterfowl.pdf)

**Website for Birdlife Tasmania (*Yellow Throat*, their newsletter archive, is accessible under Publications):**

<http://www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-tasmania>

**Comic explainer: forest giants house thousands of animals (so why do we keep cutting them down?)**

<https://theconversation.com/comic-explainer-forest-giants-house-thousands-of-animals-so-why-do-we-keep-cutting-them-down-106708>