

# The North-Eastern Naturalist

ISSUE 166 July 2005

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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.**

**July 9**

**FORESTER AREA** : A moderate 5km walk all easy going, featuring tall forest and a remnant of the Forester to Bridport Railway. Meet at 10 am. At the Forester Scout Cabin entrance. Take the Old Waterhouse Road to its signposted junction with the Williams Hill Road - 17 km's from Scottsdale. Then turn east along the Pearly Brook for 2km's. Tasmap: Forester 1:100 000 . Leader: Mike Douglas 63 561 243.

**August 13**

**AT HOME** : Photo / Philm Phestival. The drawcard for this social day is the film "Travelling Birds" [by the same director as Microcosmos]. Other reputable photographers will strut their stuff as well. Bring something to share for lunch, and sit back, enjoy the day. Beginning 10am at Lou and Ron Brooker's home, 482 East Minstone Road, Scottsdale.

**September 10**

**LOWER MARSH CREEK** : We will visit this little known and even less often visited reserve at the foot of St. Mary's Pass under the guidance of Michael Garrett, a fern specialist and author of "The Ferns of Tasmania". The reserve contains all five of the state's tree fern species, including *Cyathea cunninghamii* and the skirted tree fern, *Cyathea marcescens*, which is found nowhere else. Meet at the Pancake Barn, Mt. Elephant at 10a.m. Contact: Lou Brooker.

**October 1**

► please note change from usual date.

**ROCK ORCHIDS** : Jill and Ron Harris will host this visit to their bush block on the banks of the Musselroe River. They have marked tracks through the bush, especially to the spot where the rock orchids are abundant. Meet at the pub in Pioneer at 10am. Contact : Jill Harris 6352 3033

# Club news and reports

## Vales

### **Ern Armstrong.**

We are saddened by the passing of Ern Armstrong. All of us have very special memories to remind us of Ern's valuable contribution to our club.

He became a member of the club at its inception in 1972 and held the office of Vice President for more than ten years. He was made a Life Member in recognition of his dedication.

Under Ern's guidance the club made annual visits to the Blue Tier at Waratah flowering time. Ern knew this area intimately from his early farming days and his stories made history come alive for us.

A couple of years ago, the staff of the Queen Victoria Museum along with Ern's family and our club celebrated his "staggering contribution" [Dr. Brian Smith's words] to the museum's collections. Over a period of forty years, Ern and his family had sent in one hundred specimens; one of them—the "Armstrong flounder" hasn't been collected since.

One of the things that impressed me most about Ern was his caring nature. He always had some little interesting snippet of news to share. Sometimes he brought little gifts for people or something he wanted to show them. He often had photos to share and was forever making pieces on his wood lathe to give away.

We join with Gwen and her family in mourning his loss, but at the same time we give thanks for Ern's quiet enthusiasm and his many gifts of love.

### **Ted Clayton**

The last time we had the pleasure of Ted's company, was March 13th 2004 when we did the old faithful "Wade up Constable Creek".

Ted had been the President in a north western field nats. group before he came to St. Helens. He contributed to our field nats club by leading outings. He learned a lot about the areas around St. Helens and would quite often replicate walks with F/Nats. that he had taken the Rambler group on. I suppose the difference was the PACE at which the F/N.'s walked..... we often stopped to examine and identify plants and this is where Ted came into his own—with a very sound knowledge of the plants of Tasmania. He was always willing to share what he knew.

His walks always had a specific focus.....such as rock orchids, or Wally's wattle or the endangered Davies Wax flower.

One of the more memorable walks was up Seaton Tier to have a look at the rock orchids in flower. Even though the tier was criss-crossed with four wheel drive tracks and it would have been easy to take the wrong path, Ted had done his homework the week before and kept us on track.

Another time we found ourselves thwarted, on our drive to the top of Tower Hill, by a closed boom gate.

Ted wasn't daunted at all by this disappointment and quickly made another plan. Still, he was able to show us the uncommon endemic wattle, *Acacia pataczekii*, to hold our interest and maintain his credibility.

Ted passed away in May after a brief illness. We will miss this modest gentleman and the wealth of knowledge he was always

so willing to share.

### **Ron Sowter.**

Another Scottsdale Senior and long-time Field Nat., Ron led walks to his favourite places on the Diddleum. Jill and I remember times after his wife died, when he would come around for a chat and to show us his latest, biggest Banksia. Ron has been in a nursing home in Launceston close to his family for a couple of years, but the Scottsdale community still holds him dear and gave him a fond farewell at a memorial service recently.

### **Glenn Cook**

A member whom most of us had never met, but never-the-less an avid supporter of the club. From time to time she wrote us complimentary letters and I know she really enjoyed getting the newsletter. Glenn lived at Pioneer where she painted the most exquisite botanical pictures. Condolences to Michael and family.

## Recent A.G.M.-June

As usual, there was a good roll up to the A.G.M. which was held at Moulting Bay near St. Helens. The usual reports were received, with the president showing a collection of photos taken on our outings. Members voted to raise subs. These are now a flat rate of \$20. [this covers single members or a couple or a family] There are a couple of changes in the line-up of office bearers - Mike Douglas was elected Vice President and Pam Bretz agreed to be a committee member. Next year's AGM will be held in August.

Guest speaker Anne-Maree Pearse promised not to "dumb-down" her talk about Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour Disease, and the resulting presentation was a fascinating account of how she and her team have over the past year and a half, gone about the task of researching the cytology of the disease. Watch for her paper !!

Betty and Ken Tucker hosted the meeting in their holiday house....a warm fire on a wet day and a lovely morning tea to greet us. Special thanks to them !

## At McKerrow's Marsh - May

McKerrow's Marsh is a wetland comprised of approximately 400 hectares of unallocated Crown Land and river reserve at the bottom of the Great Forester River catchment. The area has been recommended as a high priority for reservation in recognition of its regional conservation significance. Work is currently being undertaken by the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment to determine the environmental water requirements of the wetland. McKerrows Marsh is composed of a complex mosaic of vegetation communities. The majority of the wetland is composed of old growth swamp forest, with *Acacia melanoxylon* (Blackwood) and *Melaleuca ericifolia* (Paperbark) being the dominant species. There are specimens of *Melaleuca squarosa* within the forest that are approximately 40cm in diameter, up to 10 meters in height, and over 200 years old. *Melaleuca squarosa* usually occurs as a shrub 2-3 meters in height. Other vegetation communities represented within the wetland include buttongrass sedgeland, sedgeland heaths, shrublands and

# news and reports cont'd.....

eucalyptus forest. *Lymnodynastes peronii* (the striped marsh frog), a threatened species, has been recorded in the area.

The Marsh is surrounded by freehold land and the unforested area of the wetland has been leased for many years for pastoral purposes. Much of the unforested area has been periodically burned. At some point in the past the river was straightened at the lower end of the wetland. Weeds such as willows, blackberry, thistles and cumbungi impact upon the unforested area.

Much of the McKerrows Marsh wetland remains flooded throughout the year and access is difficult. To begin with, its necessary to cross private farmland, so when field nats. visited the area in May, they were lucky to do so under the guidance of Jay Wilson, who with Dorset Streamcare, [now incorporated in Dorset Natural Resource Management] has been hot on the paper trail that is necessary when seeking a higher priority reserve status.

*Dorset NRM is supported by the Dorset Council and by the Natural Heritage Trust through NRM North*

## **Outing to Bowlers Lagoon - April**

The diversity of landscape in North East Tasmania never ceases to amaze me! On one field nats. outing we are walking through dry sclerophyll forest surrounded by tall towers of granite, on the next, its as though we are in the desert and as far as the eye can see there are sand dunes sculpted by the wind. Next outing, we'll be wading through melaleuca wetlands inhabited by snakes and leeches.

Bowlers Lagoon is on the Red Hills property, about 1.5 km inland from Boobyalla Beach and about a kilometre from the Ringarooma River as it nears its entry to Ringarooma Bay. It lies in a hollow less than ten metres above sea level and is surrounded by about five square kilometers of mobile sand dunes.

Jeff Jennings is our leader. He's been coming to this area for about twenty years and knows a lot about the history of the area. Today he wants to see if any of an old homestead that has been covered by sand is visible yet. He's armed with a GPS, numerous maps, pictures and photocopies of old records.

There were last minute messages to and fro to check that we had a plan B just in case it was blowing a gale at the Lagoon, as it would on a vast majority of days. But no....the weather couldn't be better. A beautiful still, sunny day after overnight rain which has made the sand firm to walk on.

There's a fantastic view from the last paddock looking towards the sea and from here Bowlers Lagoon looks like a speck of water surrounded by a huge desert of sand. There's a bit of serious four wheel driving in between, then we're at the lagoon's edge.

The lagoon is about a meter deep and is filled with *Eleocharis sphacelata*, the tall spike rush, *Triglochin procera*, water ribbons, and *Baumea arthropphylla*. Surrounding the lagoon there's *Acacia sophorae*, *Banksia marginata*, *Lepto-*

*spermum lanigerum* and *Melaleuca spp.* And that's about the sum of the vegetation here for as far as the eye can see north is just sand.

We spend the rest of the day exploring. The pace is gentle. There's interesting conversation. There's amusing anecdotes and history aplenty. We come across a row of posts in the sand but the insulators that Jeff remembers are no longer attached. This is all that remains of the telegraph line that stretched between the Tamar River and Swan Island.

Just to give us all an idea of the transient nature of all these dunes, Jeff takes us to the edge of the Ringarooma River for lunch. It is hard to imagine that on this site there was a dune steep enough for kids to slide down in canoes straight into the water. And only a couple of years ago.

## **Trent Water Marina Estate**

Government is at present considering a proposal from a private company to develop the Trent Water River Estuary in Bridport into a deep water marina and the tidal flats into useable land for residential allotments. In a survey conducted by Mr. Peter Gutwein, the opinions of 470 Bridport residents and ratepayers revealed that only 46% of them supported the residential development.

## **Coastal Field Day in Bridport**

More than 30 people, many of them field nats., from as far as Launceston and St. Helens attended an interesting afternoon of speakers and site visits at a recent field day in and around Bridport. The event, titled '**Climate Change and Human Impacts on the Anderson Bay Coastline**' was hosted by Dorset NRM with support from Coastcare and Dorset Council. The day provided those attending with an opportunity to gain first hand knowledge of coastal issues, to receive best practice coastal management information, and to discuss options that relate to particular management issues.

The program included presentations at the Bridport Hall by Dr Catharina Greve from the Australian Maritime College, Dr. Werner Hennecke from the University of Tasmania, Jay Wilson, Peter Duckworth and Jeff Jennings. The range of topics included the history of the coastal environment around Bridport and Sandy Point, shorebirds of the area and some of the challenges they face, coastal processes and planning, as well as climate change and sea level rise. On the bus tour John Davey spoke about the contribution that the Bridport Coastcare Group has made in the management of the Granite Point Conservation Area. At Adam's Beach the group viewed the effects of beach erosion and discussed climate change and the Tasmanian Shoreline Monitoring and Archiving Project (TASMARC). Steve Cronin, the North-East Coast Landcare Project Officer, led a visit to Kevin and Elizabeth Hall's property, which included an inspection of a mobile sand dune that is encroaching on agricultural land and a wetland. The final stop for the day was at Barnbogle Dunes Golf Course where Greg Ramsay explained the planning and management aspects of establishing and maintaining a links golf course on a coastal dune system.

Source: Dorset NRM Snippets May 2005.

# news and reports cont'd.....

## **Orchid Help Needed.**

Sixty eight of Tasmania's 195 orchid species are listed as threatened on the Tasmanian Threatened Species Act [1995]. Under previous classifications Tasmania was home to 35 species of *Pterostylis* of which 13 species were listed as threatened. The recent taxonomic upheaval of the sub-tribe Pterostylidinae has meant that the conservation status of several species has been downgraded, upgraded or listed as uncertain. This has made it increasingly difficult to implement management plans outlined within the Draft Tasmanian Threatened Orchid Recovery Plan [2004]

Jasmine Janes at the School of Plant Science, U. Tas. is attempting with her Ph.D. project to resolve some of these issues through molecular analysis of the Parviflora complex. She would like to hear from any orchid enthusiast who knows of populations of *Pterostylis atriola*, *Pterostylis parviflora*, *Pterostylis uliginosa*, or *Pterostylis aphylla*.

You could contact her on [03] 6226 1827 or 0407800420  
Or write an email to [jkjanes@utas.edu.au](mailto:jkjanes@utas.edu.au)

## **Tasmanian Arboretum**

A new 400 metre trail has just been opened at the Tasmanian Arboretum. The Don River Nature Trail is the work of a subgroup of the Burnie Field Nats. Club and takes visitors beyond the Tasmanian Alpine Section down a steep section, through some interesting native bush, along the Don River, then exiting through a gate close to the Tasmanian plant section.

The visitor can use a laminated trail sheet available from the kiosk and education centre.

## **Forestry Takes Track Markers.**

Late in March, Forestry Tasmania removed the track markers from what they termed an "unauthorised walking route" developed by the Friends of the Blue Tier. The track in question is the one we took in 2003 to the "Blue Tier Giant".

A spokesperson for F.T. says that members of the public are entitled to walk in State Forest although they do so at their own risk. Hazard signs at both the start of the Big Tree Walk and at the end of the Crystal Hill Walk have been erected.

The Big Tree is reserved in line with F.T.'s big tree policy where a 40-metre buffer is left around a significant tree. (remember el Grande?) Steve Manson says F.T. does not intend to build a safer track. The rest of this area around the tree will eventually be clearfelled. The area surrounding the Crystal Hill Walk is scheduled soon.

## **Tasmanian Land Conservancy News**

From the Winter 2005 newsletter

- **FOR SALE: Orchid heaven - A rare and important woodland property near the beach.**

The Dorothy Reeves Reserve at Port Sorell is now for sale. Only minutes from Port Sorell and beautiful beaches this attractive 19 hectare property of open Black gum woodland and sphagnum bog nurtures a range of threatened species

from endangered orchids to burrowing crayfish. There are 33 species of orchids on this block, including one critically endangered and one that was until recently unknown! Surrounded by cleared and introduced pasture this important oasis of remnant bushland needs a willing custodian. Approximately one hectare is set aside for occupation and construction of a dwelling while the remainder of the land is protected under a conservation covenant.

The T.L.C. are seeking expressions of interest with offers around \$165,000 .

### • **Long Point Reserve**

The process of acquiring Long Point, our first major permanent TLC reserve project is continuing. Before the transfer can take place the title has to be converted from its original land grant title and a new title for Long Point Reserve created.

### • **New Reserve Gifted**

Several years ago a Tasmanian doctor purchased a magical area of forest. The property is near Mt Field National Park and adjacent to the Mount Bethune Conservation Area.

With a view to conserving the area he has kept it and managed it to look after it's flora and fauna. Now retiring, he has made the very generous offer of giving the land to the TLC as a permanent TLC reserve.

The majority of the 43 ha property comprises beautiful dry inland Silver peppermint (*Eucalyptus tenuiramis*) forest.

The dry, sparse and rocky understorey is in amazingly good condition.

As well as it's aesthetic quality, Silver peppermint forest is an important type of forest to conserve. Across Tasmania, it has been extensively cleared to create grazing land and there is very little of it's original extent reserved in protected areas.

The land will now be kept permanently by TLC and managed as a nature reserve.

## **Residents rally against Gunn's pulp mill**

Concerned residents from the Tamar Valley in northern Tasmania have been told emitted particles from Gunns' proposed pulp mill at Bell Bay could travel as far as Launceston.

The Clean Air Society has been warned that each day the proposed Tasmanian pulp mill will emit the pollution equivalent of 2000 wood heaters to Launceston's air quality problem.

The Tamar Residents Action Committee is concerned about the emissions, their possible negative health effects, and how flushings into Bass Strait might linger for up to three months. There are also concerns about pressure on water supply out of the Pipers River.

We are probably all be worried to learn last week that native timbers will be required for the next 35 years to make the mill viable.

## **Forest Debate goes on.**

Despite the government's huge injection of money into Tasmania's Community Forest Agreement, along with valuable forest areas in the Tarkine and Styx being newly reserved, forests in the areas near and dear to us, the North East High-

# news and reports cont'd.....

lands, Blue Tier, and Ben Lomond remain open to logging.

Much of the other newly reserved land will consist of streamside reserves and clumps of highly threatened tree species. Did you see the map....lots of little black dots.

The Agreement still fails to address the need for a full restructuring of the industry to end old growth logging, or to properly support tourism jobs. There also appears to be a backing away from commitments to end the use of 1080 poison.

The plan is tackling broadscale land clearing for plantation establishment, one of the most intractable problems in Tasmania. While this is a good start, it is crucial both governments ensure implementation. It is still a major concern that 70,000 ha. of future clearing will be permitted by the policy.

## **2005 Environment Award for Children's Literature winners**

The Environment Award for Children's Literature is intended to promote books which inspire a sense of wonder and a sense of caring for the natural world.

The annual Environment Award, inaugurated in 1994, is open to fiction and non-fiction children's books published in Australia. Award trophies and certificates are presented to authors and illustrators that best encourage an attitude of caring, wonder and understanding of the natural world, or those that promote an awareness of environmental issues.

Picture Book Award:

*Belonging* by Jeannie Baker (Walker Books Australia) Jeannie Baker's meticulous collages and message of caring for the environment have earned her the Environment Award for Children's Literature for a third time.

*The World that we Want* by Kim Michelle Toft (University of Queensland Press) Kim uses sumptuous silk paintings to illustrate her books.

Non-Fiction Award :The works of Greg Pyers.

The non-fiction winner this year is Greg Pyers, who is turning out to be a total legend with his natural history writing for children. This is his second Environment Award for his outstanding contribution in helping educate kids about the world that we need and want.

## **Musselroe Wind Farm**

WORK on the \$220m wind farm in north-east Tasmania could start next year. The project, with more than 40 generators, is a step closer after Hydro Tasmania and Birds Tasmania reached agreement on several matters.

Birds Tasmania appealed against Hydro's plan to build 43 wind turbines at Little Musselroe Bay because of concerns they would impact on birds in the area.

The project development manager for Hydro, Gustavo Bodini, says it has reached an agreement with Birds Tasmania to re-

locate four turbines and monitor the site for possible effects on birds.

He says it is now waiting on Federal Government approval before work can start.

## **Deer around the Western Lakes.**

DPIWE is currently investigating the distribution of fallow deer within the Central Plateau Conservation Area, which is part of Tasmania's World Heritage Area. The investigations include the Walls of Jerusalem. They know about established populations of deer around Bronte Park, Mienna, Steppes and Arthur's Lake.

If you have spotted deer in the western parts of the World Heritage area, Steve Locke would like to hear from you.

Phone: 6233 6556.

## **Pass the Salt**

Did you know that in the Waterhouse district that rainfall deposits 242 kilograms of salt per hectare every year?

Source: Dorset NRM Snippets May 2005

## **Trawlers Threaten Tasmania's Giant Crabs**

Trawlers operating off Tasmania's west coast appear to pose a major threat to the local giant crab fishery, and the marine environment. Bottom trawlers are well known as an indiscriminate and destructive method of fishing. For example, dragging a heavy trawl across reef areas has a similar impact to bulldozing a forest. Some bottom trawls can be up to 100 m across. That is not a typo. Bottom trawls currently being used off the south-east coast of Australia can cut a swathe of destruction 100 m across as they are towed at 4 knots. Concern about this practice is widespread in the community, and shared by most fishers in the non-trawl fishing sectors.

A recent report (Bermudes and Gardner, 2003) indicates that the South East Trawl Fishery (SETF) is shifting its effort and that this is having a significant impact on the Tasmanian giant crab fishery.

Data on trawl depths clearly indicates that the trawl fishery is shifting its effort into the shallower areas where the giant crab fishery operates. There has also been an increase in the number of crabs found with missing limbs as one moves towards the areas where trawling occurs.

This is not good news for the giant crab fishery. This species is slow-growing and incapable of recovering quickly from inappropriate levels of fishing or significant habitat destruction. It is likely that the shift in trawl activity is having an impact by taking, injuring or killing the crabs themselves. The destruction of habitat associated with bottom trawling is also likely to have an impact on the crab population.

The impact on the giant crab fishery is bad enough. There will be an economic cost to fishery, and future management will be greatly complicated. It is possible that the fishery will cease to be economically viable. Concern

among the crab fishers themselves is high. One fisher in the Crustacean Fishery Advisory Committee estimates that a single trawler could cover the entire west coast crab fishing ground in just four days of trawling. Of course the impacts are not limited to the crab fishery alone. Many other species will suffer the impact of bottom trawling either directly or through damage to the habitat that they need to survive. Both the Tasmanian and Commonwealth Government fisheries management agencies (Marine Resources and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority respectively) have been made aware of this problem, and it is to be hoped that something will be done in the near future

Source: Jon Bryan—Tasmanian Conservation Trust Website. <http://www.tct.org.au/n27p.htm>

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### **Problems for the Leatherwood Honey Industry**

Leatherwood is the only resource in the Tasmanian forest guaranteed to flower every year, but trees need to be over seventy years old before there is this regular supply. Leatherwood honey is a wonderful unique product regarded as one of the finest in the world. Without leatherwood, commercial beekeeping in Tasmania will be unsustainable.

Most of the accessible leatherwood in Tasmania is on Crown Land managed by Forestry Tas. The leatherwood resource tends to be in the most sheltered and fertile areas, but Forestry have clearfelled and burnt many of these areas rich in leatherwood and then put them into plantation. The RFA states that Forestry must enhance and develop the beekeeping industry but clearly Forestry has failed to do this. [according to a pamphlet entitled “Why Leatherwood is crucial to Commercial Beekeeping in Tasmania.”]

Beekeepers in mainland Australia rely on eucalypts for their honey flows. They have approximately 300 different species of eucalypt available and can travel long distances (often interstate) between commercial stands to obtain these flows. Tasmania has just 27 different species of eucalypt, all of which flower unreliably. Both blue gum and stringy bark are unreliable. The blue gum flowers normally every two to four years, around October and November, but with gaps of approximately 7 years to be known between flowerings. Although the stringy bark flowers at an important time of year, [Feb. to April] it has been known for 20 years to pass between flowerings.

Leatherwood is only useful to bees if it is within 3km of a road which will support truck access (so that the beekeeper can bring in the hives, which weigh between 30-50kg each, and take out the honey boxes). Most of the Leatherwood in reserves cannot be accessed in this way and might as well be on the moon for all the use it is to beekeepers.

Most of the commercial beekeepers in southern Tasmania (where the majority of pollination is required) have left the southern forests because clearfelling and burning has decimated the accessible leatherwood forest. The last piece of accessible leatherwood left to commercial beekeepers is in an area near Lake Gordon, known as the Wedge. Forestry Tasmania is cable logging this area and destroying the leatherwood-rich forests as you read this. Over the next three years sites for some 450 hives will be lost as a result of this logging.

There is plenty of room for both the honey and the forestry industries; with more wisdom from the government and less greed from the forest industries, a more equitable balance could be achieved.

Source: [www.saveyourleatherwoodhoney.com](http://www.saveyourleatherwoodhoney.com)

## Swamp Gum Forest : Boobyalla River

Just to the east of Little Mount Horror, on the Boobyalla River at GR 55 GEQ 68425 61411 is an *Eucalyptus ovata* forest and woodland with associated wetlands and wet heaths.

The riparian tract is about 4km in length and 0.5km in width. It contains a mosaic of swamp gum and stringy bark regrowth and old growth, sometimes intermingled and sometimes dominated by one or the other of these eucalypts. The wetter sites are dominated solely by swamp gums with a variety of paperbarks and tea trees forming the upper understorey. Sites not so prone to inundation are dominated by stringybark together with swampgum and often have a tall understorey of blackwood, dogwood and huge old paperbarks. Where fire has penetrated frequently the understorey has a dense sedgy lower stratum with sword grasses, cutting grass and various ferns. Stinging nettles are common near the river banks.

On the eastern side of the river, between the riparian tract and the slopes of Martin's Hill, is a substantial area of about 100 hectares, of swampgum / peppermint woodland with a damp heathy understorey. This woodland belt is up to 1km in width and contains some tracts of buttongrass moorland.

The whole swampgum complex occupies a little more than 200 hectares. A swampgum riparian tract and adjuncts of this size is a rarity and indeed may be unique. It is a priceless piece of Tasmania's diversity. Its value was recognised by the creation of the Martin's Hill Forest Reserve in the late 1990's. Those parts outside the reserve are protected by the conservation of biodiversity provisions within the Regional Forest Agreement.

The R.F.A. provides protection for at least a specified minimum amount of each forest community. This is 10% of the area existing before European settlement.

Between 1% and 5% of *E. ovata* tracts are extant. Accordingly there are strictly observed protocols in place to preserve these remnants. Never-the-less, *E. ovata* is not a threatened species. Non riparian tracts, up to a few hectares, are scattered across the north-east. Riparian tracts, mostly fragmentary, occur on the Great Forester, Brid, Little Forester, Talina, Little Boobyalla and Tomahawk Rivers. Those on the Great Forester and Brid are on decline with over-mature trees and no regrowth. There is a healthy block adjacent to the Duncraggen Reserve on the Brid River but it is not riparian. A tract on private land, abutting the Little Forester River near Nabowla is said to be impressive. The Little Boobyalla Conservation Area, near Mt. Cameron, is another site to be explored.

The Boobyalla River tract in its size and diversity, is outstanding.

### Notes on *Eucalyptus ovata*.

Common names: swampgum in the north; blackgum in the south.

N.B. in the south, swampgum refers to *Eucalyptus regnans*.

Varieties: In Tasmania we have *E. ovata* var. *ovata*, which also occurs in Vic. N.S.W. and S.A.

Description: Often a small to medium sized tree but sometimes the habit is that of a tall forest tree up to about 40m in height.

Bark is deciduous, peeling in thick ribbons. The trunk is rough and scaly towards the base, the upper part and branches are smooth and white or pinkish-grey, sometimes with orange streaks.

Juvenile leaves are ovate, opposite for a few pairs, then alternating, petiolate [stalked]

Adult leaves are glossy and undulate, ovate to broadly lanceolate, up to 17 x 3.5cms. A crushed leaf gives a faint, sweetish smell.

Buds are diamond shaped, the operculum [cap] slightly beaked or sometimes rounded in clusters of 4-7.

Fruits - capsules or gum nuts - are obconical; up to 0.8 x 0.8 cm; the valves 3 to 4, to rim level or slightly exserted.

Timber is of indifferent quality and durability.

Distribution: scattered over much of Tasmania, but not in the central west or central south west. In the drier regions, it typically occurs in the topographically distinct situations that collect water into drainage basins. Occurs on a wide range of habitats from sea level to about 600m. Occasionally as high as 830m as at Lake Sorell on the eastern central plateau. Tolerates a considerable degree of water-logging. Was once widespread but tracts were largely cleared for agriculture.

Field nats. visited the Boobyalla River swamp gum forest last year with Mike Douglas. These notes were prepared by him and printed with his permission.

# **SUBS ARE NOW DUE !**

**If you did not pay your subs at the recent A.G.M., would you please mail them to the secretary/treasurer [address on front page] before the next newsletter.**

**There will not be another reminder.**

**\$22 single, couple or family.**

If undelivered please return to :

**North East Field Naturalist Club Inc.  
P.O. Box 22,  
Scottsdale, Tas. 7260.**



The reason whales beach themselves. ..newspaper article.

Little article about protection of the deep [coloured chart from the ACF.]

Weedy grevilleas -- Eucryphia

List of books in the Field nats library.

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Old newsletter items September 1983 Volume vs velocity [quote]

Frome Kayak Club Nr. 83

Exploring Uppper Scamander Number 87

Velvet worm nr. 90 & 107

Lower Marsh Creek report .... Michael Garret Number 118 & 119

Velvet worm report Bob Mesibov number 102

[The Census of Tasmanian Vascular Plants \(www.tmag.tas.gov.au/Herbarium/TasVascPlants\).](http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/Herbarium/TasVascPlants)

[Save Ralph's Bay](#)

# **SUBS ARE NOW DUE !**

**If you did not pay your subs at the recent A.G.M., would you please mail them to the secretary/treasurer [address on front page] before the next newsletter.**

**There will not be another reminder.**

**\$22 single, couple or family.**

If undelivered please return to :

**North East Field Naturalist Club Inc.  
P.O. Box 22,  
Scottsdale, Tas. 7260.**