



# 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 final issue of the North-Eastern Naturalist to be published under my editorship. After just over eight years in the position, it's time for me to step aside and allow someone else to bring fresh ideas to the role.

Although eight years sounds like a long period of time, it seems to have passed by very quickly.

A new editor hasn't been appointed as yet, but whoever takes on this position, I wish them every success in a role that can be frustrating, but can also

be very satisfying.

I would like to thank the many members and non-members who have contributed articles and/or photos over the past eight years. Without your invaluable contributions this newsletter would not have been possible.

Finally, in the immortal words of the Two Ronnies (Ronnie Corbett and Ronnie Barker):

Ronnie C: 'So it's goodbye from me.'

Ronnie B: 'And it's goodbye from him!'



Golden pea (*Aotis ericoides*)  
– Louise Brooker

### Members' photos of NE Tasmania



Flowering gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*; aka  
*Eucalyptus ficifolia*) – Chris Forbes-Ewan



Male blue-spotted Hawker  
dragonfly (*Adversaeschna*  
*brevistyla*) – Ruth Timperon

# Program for Early 2023

## MARCH 11<sup>th</sup>

### Exploring Low Head with Marita Bodman

Amongst other goodies, this outing will include a walk between East Beach and Bell Buoy Beach. See email message sent by Lou Brooker on 6 March for details.

## APRIL 22<sup>nd</sup>

### Fungi Foray at Diddleum Plains

Note change of outing date from the usual second Saturday both because it's Easter and to fit in with Susan McClenaghan's invitation to join with Genevieve Gates. Details to be provided by email later.

## MAY 13<sup>th</sup>

Walk up Mt Scott. Details to be provided by email later.

**Cancellation Process:** If there is unpredictable and severe weather, or for any other reason, including if the leader considers the conditions to be unsafe, it may occasionally be necessary to cancel with short notice. Here is the process for cancellation: a global email will be sent by 1900 (i.e. 7.00 pm) on the previous day, or by 0700 (7.00 am) at the latest on the day of the outing. A notice will also be posted on the website: [netasfieldnats.com.au](https://netasfieldnats.com.au)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

*From Jay Wilson:*

### Ants and what they mean for the planet

[https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/dec/28/insects-20-quadrillion-ants-ecosystem-planet-aoe?CMP=share\\_btn\\_link](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/dec/28/insects-20-quadrillion-ants-ecosystem-planet-aoe?CMP=share_btn_link)

### Tasmanian Reporter Road Kill App

[https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/living-with-wildlife/tasmanian-wildlife-roadkill/tasmanian-roadkill-reporter-app?fbclid=IwAR1L9cGQVi06JuRduw2aZKXfuJPhMgsZj7M1mYs\\_qy0ya7KqYHpmGJAPtU](https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/living-with-wildlife/tasmanian-wildlife-roadkill/tasmanian-roadkill-reporter-app?fbclid=IwAR1L9cGQVi06JuRduw2aZKXfuJPhMgsZj7M1mYs_qy0ya7KqYHpmGJAPtU)

### Articles from The Conversation:

#### Why Tasmania and Victoria dominate the list of Australia's largest trees – and why these majestic giants are under threat

<https://theconversation.com/why-tasmania-and-victoria-dominate-the-list-of-australias-largest-trees-and-why-these-majestic-giants-are-under-threat-200276>

#### We found 29 threatened species are back from the brink in Australia. Here's how

<https://theconversation.com/we-found-29-threatened-species-are-back-from-the-brink-in-australia-heres-how-200057>

#### Snakes can hear you scream, new research reveals

<https://theconversation.com/snakes-can-hear-you-scream-new-research-reveals-199958>

#### Goffin's cockatoo named third species that carries toolsets around in preparation for future tasks

<https://theconversation.com/goffins-cockatoo-named-third-species-that-carries-toolsets-around-in-preparation-for-future-tasks-199408>

#### The world's largest organism is slowly being eaten by deer

<https://theconversation.com/the-worlds-largest-organism-is-slowly-being-eaten-by-deer-172294>

*My final recommendation (as Newsletter Editor) for further reading is an entry in the Guinness Book of Records:*

“The world's oldest colony of genetically identical trees is the stand of Huon pine (*Lagarostrobos franklinii*) on the west coast of Tasmania, Australia. The stand is believed to be over 10,500 years old ...”

<https://tinyurl.com/49kvfadh>



**View of Fingal and beyond from the top of Bare Rock (CFE)**

**Editorial Note:** The text of this article is a slight variation of an article that was first published in the North-Eastern Advertiser on 21 December, 2022.

The location for our December activity was Bare Rock, a massive rock face that rises from the valley floor a kilometre or so south of Fingal. Led by Roy Skabo, 13 members attended this activity.

Bare Rock is a mecca for rock climbers from all over Tasmania and beyond. It is an awe-inspiring sight from close-up, and any climber attempting one of its many ascent routes is rendered miniscule against its height of 300 m.

We took the easier route to the top of the rock—a very rough track (Mt Foster Rd), which leaves the Esk Highway a couple of kilometres west of Fingal, and winds its way about 8 km to the top, first through farmland and then forest.

The last kilometre of the track passes through an area rendered unsightly by recent logging, and then the track terminates at a parking area marked by a boulder with a bright-red, misspelled sign—BEAR ROCK—painted on it.

From the parking area it was an easy downhill walk of perhaps 200 m to the fairly flat shelf above Bare Rock. From here, the views over Fingal and across to the southern end of the Ben Lomond National Park are spectacular.

The shelf is covered in a mosaic of bare dolerite rock and patches of native grass. The grassy areas are

dotted with a variety of native herbs, shrubs and trees, including *Melaleuca pallida* and *Hibbertia riparia*.



*Melaleuca pallida*

Because of its altitude (about 600 m above sea level), this small plateau is cooler and wetter than the valley below, with the result that plants flower later here than in parts of the state at lower altitudes. As a couple of examples, the native clematis (*Clematis aristata*) and blue love creeper (*Comesperma volubile*) were still in full flower in mid-December.

The flora on this small plateau is surprisingly diverse, with about a dozen members of the daisy family, and several species from the family Ericaceae.

We spent an hour exploring the western end of the plateau, and then gathered for lunch.



Daisy of unknown species (possibly *Leucanthemum vulgare*) – CFE



*Hibbertia riparia* – CFE



*Pelargonium australe* – CFE

Conveniently positioned fallen trees provided comfortable seating during the break, after which we explored the rest of the plateau.

The rare forest germander (*Teucrium corymbosum*), a member of the mint family, was found at the eastern edge of the plateau, along with a number of other interesting plants. These included a large patch of the variable stinkweed (*Opercularia varia*), which, despite its unattractive common name, is a native species. The attractive *Pelargonium australe* also caught our eye.

During the return drive we stopped a couple of times to look at plants that aroused our interest. One of these, the native pittosporum (*Pittosporum bicolor*), is readily distinguishable by its conical habit, dark foliage and, from close up, its bell-shaped brown and yellow flowers. The purple cheeseberry (*Cyathodes glauca*) was in flower, with many plants also having the characteristic fleshy white or red fruit.

We departed from Fingal at around 3.30 pm, after an enjoyable day in a location that was a first for most of the attendees.

**PLANT SPECIES OBSERVED AND IDENTIFIED AT BARE ROCK. LIST COMPILED BY ROY SKABO.**

<u>SPECIES NAME</u>	<u>COMMON NAME</u>	<u>SPECIES NAME</u>	<u>COMMON NAME</u>
<i>Acaena echinata</i>	Spiny sheepsburr	<i>Ozothamnus scutellifolius</i>	Buttonleaf everlastingbush
<i>Acaena novaezelandiae</i>	Common buzzy	<i>Pelargonium australe</i>	Southern storksbill
<i>Acrotriche serrulata</i>	Ants delight	<i>Pimelea humilis</i>	Dwarf riceflower
<i>Agrostis venusta</i>	Graceful bent	<i>Pimelea nivea</i>	Roundleaf riceflower
<i>Ajuga australis</i>	Australian bugle	<i>Pittosporum bicolor</i>	Cheesewood
<i>Arthropodium milleflorum</i>	Pale vanilla-lily	<i>Plantago hispida</i>	Hairy plantain
<i>Asperula gunnii</i>	Mountain woodruff	<i>Poa rodwayi</i>	Velvet tussockgrass
<i>Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia</i>	Green rockfern	<i>Poranthera microphylla</i>	Small poranthera
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Common everlasting	<i>Rytidospermum pilosum</i>	Wallaby gass
<i>Comesperma volubile</i>	Blue love creeper	<i>Sebaea ovata</i>	Yellow sebaea
<i>Coronidium scorpioides</i>	Curling everlasting	<i>Senecio linearifolius</i>	Fireweed groundsel
<i>Crassula sieberiana</i>	Rock stonecrop	<i>Solenogyne gunnii</i>	Hairy flat-herb
<i>Cyathodes glauca</i>	Purple cheeseberry	<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>	Forest candles
<i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i>	Native gorse	<i>Stylidium graminifolium</i>	Trigger plant
<i>Goodenia montana</i>	Mountain goodenia	<i>Styphelia humifusa</i>	Native cranberry
<i>Hackelia suaveolens</i>	Sweet houndstongue	<i>Teucrium corymbosum</i>	Forest germander
<i>Hibbertia riparia</i>	Erect guineaflower	<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Kangaroo grass
<i>Hypoxis hygrometrica</i>	Golden weatherglass	<i>Veronica gracilis</i>	Slender speedwell
<i>Lagenophora stipitata</i>	Blue bottle daisy	<i>Viola hederacea</i> subsp. <i>Hederacea</i>	Vyleaf violet
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Sagg	<i>Wahlenbergia gracilis</i>	Sprawling bluebell
<i>Opercularia varia</i>	Variable stinkweed	<i>Wurmbea dioica</i> subsp. <i>Dioica</i>	Early nancy
<i>Oxalis perennans</i>	Grassland woodsorrel		



**Field naturalists enjoying the view from the top of Bare Rock – PR**

# FEBRUARY 2023: BRIDPORT FORESHORE AND WILDFLOWER RESERVE

Article by Ross Coad; photos by Ross Coad (RC) and Chris Forbes-Ewan (CFE)

Our first activity for 2023 was a nature walk along the Bridport foreshore on Saturday 11 February. Eighteen members and guests participated.

The foreshore walk included four main environments of interest: a salt marsh at Trent Water, a modified landscape from the Village Green to the Old Pier, the Granite Point Conservation Area, and the Bridport Wildflower Reserve.

Lou Brooker told us about the formation of the Trent Water salt marsh cluster that has developed since the redirection of the Great Forester River and Tuckers Creek in 1926, when Adams Cut was excavated. The salt marsh that has developed opposite the old resort attracts a variety of birds, including Pied Oystercatchers (*Haematopus longirostris*), Sooty Oystercatchers (*Haematopus fuliginosus*), Pacific Gulls (*Larus pacificus*), Silver Gulls (*Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*), Masked Lapwings (*Vanellus miles*), Red-capped Plovers (*Charadrius ruficapillus*) and a White-faced Heron (*Egretta novaehollandiae*). (For a full list of birds observed or heard on the day, see the list at Appendix 1, compiled by Anne Witherden.)



On the shore, overlooking the salt marsh – RC



Trent Water salt marsh – note the tyre marks that remain visible twelve months after a vehicle accessed the salt marsh – CFE

The birds feed on the crabs, shellfish, worms and small fish that live in the salt marsh. Salt-tolerant samphire (*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*) is the main plant species, however an introduced, highly invasive weed—sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*)—is also present around the edges of Trent Water.

Salt marshes are delicate environments that can be easily damaged and are slow to recover; for example, damage due to vehicle access twelve months ago was still clearly visible on this visit. An article by Lou Brooker in the September 2022 edition of *The North-Eastern Naturalist* provides more information about this salt marsh.

The group then walked along the foreshore walking track beside the caravan park. Jay Wilson explained that the dominant large tree species here is white gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), and it was noted



*Eucalyptus viminalis* (white gum) – CFE

by Ross Coad that the main medium-size tree is she-oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*).

Over time, the tree cover along the foreshore has declined, and the understory shrubs and sedges have been largely removed. The resulting more-exposed landscape has resulted in greater weed encroachment and less protection from the elements for both vegetation and visitors. There is a need for ongoing regrowth and active weed management to reverse this trend.

Among the weeds we saw is *Asparagus scandens* (common name asparagus fern), which is considered to be a particularly nasty weed.

Passing the old pier, we entered the Granite Point Conservation Area. John Davey explained that the Bridport Coastcare group liaises with the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) to maintain the natural values in this area.

Before adjourning for lunch, we walked onto the rocky foreshore, where Lloyd Reeves described the geological history of the rock formations (see Appendix 2 for details.)

With the weather being sunny and hot, it was a welcome respite to stop for lunch in the shade in the backyard of John and Jenny Davey's attractive beach-side house, before commencing the final couple of kilometres for the day—the walk through the Bridport Wildflower Reserve.



*Asparagus scandens* (asparagus fern) – CFE

Although February is not the peak month for flowering, with 180 plant species there is always something in flower in the reserve.

During this visit, pink hyacinth orchids (*Dipodium roseum*) were in flower beside the path towards the top end of the reserve.



Listening to the explanation by John Davey of the relationship between the Bridport Coast Care and PWS – CFE

Also observed were species of grasstree (*Xanthorrhoea*), some with their spent flower spikes still evident. All three Tasmanian *Xanthorrhoea* species—*australis*, *arenaria* and *bracteata*—are present in the reserve, the latter two being endemic.



Enjoying a leisurely lunch in the shade at the Bridport home of John and Jenny Davey – CFE



*Dipodium roseum* (pink hyacinth) – CFE



*Xanthorrhoea* species (grass tree) – CFE

North-Eastern Tasmania is fortunate to have a well-managed, easily-accessed reserve of this calibre at Bridport. I encourage Club members who have not visited the Bridport Wildflower Reserve to make an opportunity to do so.

**APPENDIX 1: Birds seen or heard. List compiled by Anne Witherden.**

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
<i>Vanellus miles</i>	Masked Lapwing
<i>Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae</i>	Silver Gull
<i>Haematopus longirostris</i>	Pied Oystercatcher
<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull
<i>Anthochaera chrysoptera</i>	Little Wattlebird
<i>Eolophus roseicapilla</i>	Galah
<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Brown Thornbill
<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	Silvereye
<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Kookaburra
<i>Rhipidura albiscapa</i>	Grey Fantail
<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Blue Wren
<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	Welcome Swallow
<i>Platycercus caledonicus</i>	Green Rosella
<i>Zanda funerea</i>	Yellow-tail Black-Cockatoo

Anne commented that after the walk she also saw a White-bellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*)

**APPENDIX 2: Notes on the Geology of the Foreshore at Bridport, by Lloyd Reeves**

At Bridport, beds of Mathinna Supergroup rocks are exposed along the foreshore from Eastmans Beach almost to Granite Point. These were originally formed from off-shore sedimentary deposits of siltstone, mudstone and a quartzwacke sandstone, laid down in the Ordovician to early Devonian periods (about 490 to 400 million years ago).

These deposits were folded and deformed during a period of crustal disturbance and mountain building in Eastern Australia during the mid-Devonian period.

This episode is known as the Tabberabberan Orogeny, when the layered sedimentary rocks of the



Mathinna Supergroup were compressed, heated, folded and faulted as a result of a continental collision, forming anticlines and synclines; hence the vertical Mathinna Supergroup beds seen along this part of the Bridport foreshore. Uplifting was followed by erosion.



Rock-hopping at Granite Point Conservation Area foreshore. The orange lichen is a species of the genus *Caloplaca* – RC

During the Devonian Period (410–354 million years ago) granitic magma from the Earth's core rose towards the surface forming massive, deep, dome-shaped batholiths of granite, such as the Scottsdale batholith. Subsequent erosion has exposed the tops of these batholiths.

The granodiorite we see at The Boulders and Granite Point is part of this batholith.

The same igneous granitic magma also penetrated the overlying Mathinna Supergroup sedimentary deposits, baking them, and contact metamorphosing them as hornfels, with veins and dykes of quartzite and psammite.

Interestingly, at the Boulders there is an outcrop of migmatite, formed where there is a contact zone between the granitic magma and the Mathinna Supergroup sediments. Here the magma has only partly 'digested' the Supergroup sediments, and these remnants appear as dark inclusions (known as xenoliths) within the pink granite. This migmatite outcrop has a National Heritage listing as a Geological Monument.

As previously mentioned, the granite rock at Bridport is granodiorite. This contains more plagioclase feldspar than orthoclase feldspar, making it darker in colour than granite.

Both the granite and the granodiorite contain interlocked grains of quartz, feldspar and muscovite (mica) crystals.

It formed in the Devonian period 410–354 million years ago.

Note: Lloyd gratefully acknowledges as his major source of information Mike Douglas's Compilation titled *Granite Point and Adams Beach – Bridport*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, October 2013.



View to the east: the granite rock at Bridport is granodiorite (see text at left), with some adamellite – CFE

# A CULTURAL WORKSHOP WITH AUNTY PATSY CAMERON

Text and photos by Chris Forbes-Ewan

On Saturday 28 January, Sandra and I attended a workshop conducted at Bridestowe Lavender Farm by the highly-respected NE Tasmanian Aboriginal Elder Aunty Patsy Cameron.

Open to people of all ages at no cost, the workshop aimed to educate attendees on which plant foods and medicines were available to Aborigines in pre-European times in northern Tasmania—while also providing the opportunity to taste each plant food—and to teach us how to make an Aboriginal ‘carry bag’ that could be used to carry a small quantity of water or item of food.

About twenty people attended, with ages ranging from three to the late seventies, and everyone had a go at making a bag. Aunty Patsy deftly answered questions about Aboriginal food and craftwork, and was very helpful with the bag-making. Everyone seemed to enjoy the hands-on session, and many stayed to ask questions. The session was not only entertaining, but also informative.

The photo below left shows the foods available for tasting. From far right, and going clockwise they are: Samphire (*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*); Native Parsley (*Apium prostratum*); Beans of Boronia (*Boronia gunnii* – in the middle of the picture); Pigface (*Carpobrotus rossii*); Native Currants (*Coprosma quadrifida*); Cheese berries (*Cyathodes glauca* – purple/red); Native Pepperberry (*Tasmannia lanceolata* – red stem, green leaves), and dried Boronia Beans.

The photo below right shows the bag I made. It consists of twine made by twisting two stems of long grass together, and a piece of bull kelp. The photo shows the finished bag holding some pigface.



Some native plant foods in North-Eastern Tasmania



A carry bag made using a traditional Aboriginal technique

Finally, Jay Wilson found a request from Landcare Tasmania for assistance from Citizen Scientists.

The URL for this request is: [https://www.landcaretas.org.au/black\\_rats\\_study\\_2023](https://www.landcaretas.org.au/black_rats_study_2023)

In brief, Ink Kittipalawattanapol from UTAS Biological Sciences Club is currently collating samples of the invasive black rat (*Rattus rattus*) across northern Tasmania, and is looking to increase the sample size.

Ink is currently doing a PhD project investigating the impacts black rats have in Tasmania, particularly following the recent decline in the number of Tasmanian devils.

An aspect of the project is research into how black rats move across Tasmania over time, using their genetic markers.

If you are culling black rats on your property, and live in a relevant area of northern Tasmania (access the above URL for details), you may be able to assist in research aimed at controlling this invasive pest.