



DUBBO FIELD NATURALIST & CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.

Fostering interest, knowledge and enjoyment in natural history and conservation since 1977

www.dubbofieldnats.org.au

FIELD NOTES

February 2011

GUEST SPEAKER AND FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

FEBRUARY SOCIAL MEETING

Tuesday 15 February. 7.00pm supper for 7:30 meeting start

Venue: Kurrajong Room, 1st Floor Community Arts Building, Western Plains Cultural Centre, Wingewarra Street. Please bring a plate to share for supper.

Speaker: Andrew Edwards 'Fire and biodiversity in the monsoon tropics of NT'. Andrew will be discussing the use of fire in the savannas of western Arnhemland to reduce carbon emissions.

Meeting Contact: Kerry Palmer 0427 480 440

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP: TEACH AND TELL SITE + DUBBO STP

Sunday 20 February. Meet at 9am at Gipps St, Western Plains Cultural Centre.

Start at the 'Teach and Tell' site at the Dubbo Senior High Campus. Joan will discuss the significance and plans for the site. 9am—11am

As a 'bonus (optional) extra' - a ~1.5hr visit to the Troy (Dubbo) Sewage Treatment plant is also planned. Hear about the proposed bird hide and wetland, and assist in the annual national shorebird survey.

Trip Leaders: Joan Rheinburger and Tim Hosking 0438 600 837

No 'Birds and Botany' trip planned in February.

NOTE: 2011 CLUB SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE!

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AIMS OF OUR SOCIETY

- *To foster interest, knowledge and enjoyment in natural history, particularly in the Dubbo Region*
- *To speak out on environmental and conservation issues, particularly those affecting our area*
- *To achieve these aims by meetings with lectures, discussions and field trips.*

CONTACTS:

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Conservation
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dubbo Field Nats is a community organisation working toward the preservation and regeneration of our natural environment. This Society has seen many changes in our local landscape while undertaking many successful environmental campaigns since establishing in 1977.

Today the society has an active role within the community, consulting & commenting on environmental issues, networking & partnering with local business and organisations. The society also conducts practical measures in support of the environment; by assisting with education through public meetings, guest speakers, field trips, research, publishing resources, maintain website and conducting surveys and other activities.

Importantly Dubbo Field Nats continues to lobby government to improve planning & ecologically sustainable development.

We all have a responsibility to become involved, to participate and contribute ideas that ensures protection of our flora, fauna, habitat, water land & air; and actively oppose those activities that degrade them, to protect ourselves from the unconscious inhumanities of inadequate and inappropriate planning & development.

We are not limited by imagination – only by capacity in our human & other resources.

We welcome your continued support for our important work throughout this new year and wish the very best to all for 2011

Regards Kerry

P.S. consider getting more involved and joining the committee!

STATUS REPORT: FLORA & FAUNA BOOK

Just a quick update to the membership about the production of the '**Plants and Animals of Dubbo**' book that a few committee members have been working on recently.

Recent activities include:

- Finalising a digital template with the help of a local Dubbo graphics design company, 'Indesign', with financial assistance from the Central West Catchment Management Authority.
- Several chapters are near complete, with others on the way.
- Discussions have commenced with various artists for cover art, chapter art and photo gathering.

Rob Taylor still needs some photographs for various mammals, so if you've good-quality digital photos, let him know! Also, if you are a budding artist with nature art or similar, let Tim Hosking know.

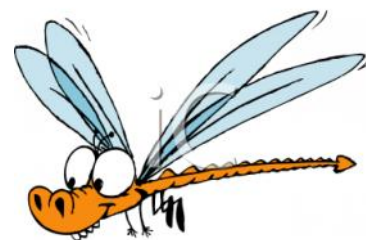
There are several grant opportunities we are aiming for to cover printing costs (approx \$15K), primarily NSW Envirotrust community grants.

General inquiries to contact@dubbofieldnats.org.au or Tim or Rob.

MEMBER'S CONTRIBUTION

Dragonflies—by Elsie Howe

On a day with some high temperatures, my front garden became filled just before dusk with apparently same-species DRAGONFLIES, cruising around looking for night-time roosting spots. They chose leaf-bare thin-twigged dead branches on the bottlebrush - showing the need NOT to tidily prune off such 'messy' remnants, since animals as various as insects and birds do need a wide range of plant formats during their daily activities....just as we oscillate between chairs, tables and beds!



Instant memories came back of the BIG gale we had around decade ago, which saw HUNDREDS of many different species of dragonflies, big and small, some with vivid red or blue bodies, trapped in my tree-surrounded back garden, where they'd obviously been dumped by a down-draft. I was too busy clearing up the garden damage back then to identify and observe their subsequent activity.

I did some research afterwards, as in my Hadlington & Johnston's *An introduction to Australian Insects* I've popped a note about the importance of dragonflies as indicator species for healthy freshwater systems: since both larval and adult are carnivorous, they accumulate pollutants; their disappearance can therefore indicate polluted systems. Plus, as with other freshwater species, they are threatened due to habitat destruction. My source was a Theischinger & Abbey's *The Australian Dragonflies: a guide to the Identity, Distribution and Habitats of Australian Odonata* (CSIRO 1991).

Dragonflies share the same ODONATA order as the similar-looking Damselflies - which generally rest with wings held vertically over the abdomen, unlike the familiar horizontal resting position of dragonflies' wings. Diagnostically also, hind and forewings are similar-sized in damselflies, whilst dragonflies have fore-wings narrower than hindwings.

I noted that one of the 17 families in ODONATA (321 spp altogether*) is the ancient Petaluridae - four gigantic species representing almost half of the world's living representatives eg *Petalura ingentissima*, which lives by stream margins and rainforest in NE Qld and C York. If I haven't mentioned its existence before, this species-number update came from the more recent 2009 publication *Numbers of Living Species in Australia and the World* 2nd ed - Dept of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. I obtained my hard copy in Oct 2009 by phoning 1800 803 772 ([email ciu@environment.gov.au](mailto:ciu@environment.gov.au)), plus it's presumably still available on-line at www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/abrs/publications/other/species-numbers/2009/index.html A resource always worth having to hand for impressive comparisons of our own flora/fauna compared to world numbers.

MEMBER'S CONTRIBUTION

Mail Box Shopper Article, Native Turtles - by Karen Hagan (Jan 2011)

Occasionally you meet someone whose knowledge and passionate interest in a subject draws you in straight away. Dubbo man Michael Gough is such a person. Although Michael's interest extends to all Australian reptiles and amphibians he is particularly dedicated to the conservation and protection of the freshwater turtles of the Murray Darling Basin.

During an impromptu Dubbo Field Naturalist excursion to view Michael's collection of native turtles we learned that there are three main species of turtle in the Murray Darling Basin, the Eastern Snake Necked Turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*), the Giant Snake Necked Turtle (*Macrochelodina expansa*) and the Macquarie River Turtle (*Emydura macquarii*). Michael was able to show us live specimens of each type of turtle and we were thrilled to be able to observe these wonderful placid animals at close quarters. We were amazed to learn from Michael that the carapace (shell) of the Giant Snake Necked turtle can be as great as 50cm in length and this when added to the length of their necks and tails can make them close to a metre long. They are the second largest snake necked turtle in the world and they are in our river!

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MEMBER'S CONTRIBUTION ...CONTD

Mail Box Shopper Article, Native Turtles - by Karen Hagan (Jan 2011)

Our family became interested in turtles after spotting them beside the road. We could not understand why these reclusive aquatic creatures were trekking overland when they seemed so ill equipped to deal with predators. Michael explained that the Eastern Snake Necked Turtles were famous for embarking upon long perilous journeys either to find a mate or to find a place to lay their eggs. Although these turtles can spray a smelly musk when threatened this affords them little protection when they try to cross roads.

All of our native turtles are vulnerable. This is largely because their nests are very susceptible to predation. A study of nesting along the Murray River found that 96% of nests of the Eastern Snake Necked Turtle, the Macquarie River Turtle and the Giant Snake Necked Turtle had been destroyed and the eggs eaten. Foxes are the main culprits but water-rats, goannas and ravens also eat turtle eggs.

Michael shared many amazing facts with us. Native turtles do not have tongues. This means that they cannot swallow food unless they are fully immersed in water. They have evolved to use water to help them suck in their food. Michael also told us that turtles have been around for more than 200 million years making them one of the oldest reptile groups, even more ancient than lizards, snakes and crocodiles.

Michael has kindly agreed to share his knowledge with the Dubbo Field Nats at one of their meetings later in the year. I can't wait! In the meantime, please remember that all native reptiles (including turtles) are protected by law in NSW and a licence is required to keep captive-bred reptiles as pets. These licences are issued by the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water.

FIELD TRIP REPORT: JANUARY MOUNT KAPUTAR CAMP

Report by Janis Hosking

We arrived about 6.30pm after a slow drive up the mountain road, to find Des, Jim and Bruce firmly settled at Dawson Springs. It was so COOL!! It is a nice camp ground with all amenities.

Not long after we had arrived, Brenda and Peter Lesueur arrived as well, so we all settled in for a night around the camp fire which we could have because it was quite COOL!

Next morning after a very leisurely breakfast, we did the Dawson Springs Nature Walk, about a 1.4km loop. The bird list was starting to grow although, all up not many birds were recorded. There were plenty of Crimson Rosellas and King Parrots which was nice to see. Bruce had already found two Greenhood orchids near camp and along all the tracks, we saw *Dipodium punctatum*, Pink Hyacinth Orchid, very pretty with its pink flowers with purple blotches, some being quite tall.

A Swainsona species was just finishing flowering throughout the whole national park with flowers varying in colour from purple, pink through to white. There were a lot of flowers still blooming despite being the end of January.

After lunch we headed off to do the lookouts and more short walks. When we arrived back at camp, there was Sue Cooper who had set up camp at Bark Hut where we were initially going to camp. However plans can change suddenly, so checking with the Trip Leader is essential as I didn't even know Sue was coming!

We all decided to see the sunset at Mt. Kaputar Summit Lookout, together with about **30 other people** who were camping. But it was lovely with the sun slowly setting, the mountains and trees all glowing with different colours. We had a short spotlight after returning, only seeing a Ring-tail Possum.

Sunday morning we packed up, stopping at every lookout on the way down the Mountain, so it took a while to come down. It certainly is a nice place to camp. Did I mention it was COOL! None of us really wanted to return home, knowing we would be in the heat again!

Bird list: 27 species, including Wedge-tailed Eagle, Crimson Rosella, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Southern Boobook, *Yellow-tufted Honeyeater* and *Spotted Quail-thrush*.



INTERESTING RECORDS FOR DEC 2010/JAN 2011

Another great set of records this month. The Common Koel has shown up, and maybe brought a few mates with him as Please send records to the Records Officer at records@dubbofieldnats.org.au

Note: Pr = pair; dy = dependent young; y = young; n = nesting

Species	No.	Date	Location	Observer	Notes
Plumed	10	1/12/10 –	Cumboogle	Craig Arms	Uncommon. Possibly resident in
Plumed Whistle-duck		08/12/10	Cooreena Road, Dubbo	David Geering	Uncommon. Possibly resident in limited areas. Dams and wetlands
Plumed Whistle-duck	2	17/12/10	Cooreena Road, Dubbo	David Geering	Uncommon. Possibly resident in limited areas. Dams and wetlands
Little Button Quail	1	29/12/10	Cumboogle	Craig Arms	Rare. Possible resident. Grasslands. Possibly under reported.
Musk Lorikeet	3	31/12/10	Gidgee Road	Simone Pye	Rare Visitor. Box Woodlands with flowering eucalypts
Singing Honeyeater	1	02/01/11	Gidgee Road	Craig Arms	Rare Visitor. Woodlands and Gardens.
Australian King Parrot	2	16/01/11	Cumboogle	Simone Pye	Uncommon Resident. Woodlands and urban areas.
Superb Parrot	12	27/01/11	Cumboogle	Craig Arms	Uncommon.

MEMBER'S CONTRIBUTION

Ten Reasons Why We Need to Look After Our Trees—link provided by Kerry Palmer

Off duty from taking the fight for street trees, Kerry has found a great link to some info on street trees from Greening Bathurst: <http://www.greeningbathurst.org.au/comp.php>

1. Trees save energy and money. Just three trees strategically planted around your home can cut your air conditioning bill in half.
2. Trees save tax dollars. Trees in a city slow storm water runoff and reduce the need for storm water drains. Tree shade also helps cool buildings, lowering electricity bills and saving greenhouse gases.
3. Trees cool our cities. Urban "heat islands" are directly related to massive tree-cutting for development. Trees reduce the need for air conditioning.
4. Trees clean our water and air. From low level ozone in our cities to pesticide and fertilizer runoff from our farms, trees absorb harmful pollutants.
5. Trees help community life. Tree planting and community based forestry can add significantly to a local community's sustainable economy while restoring the environment.
6. Trees protect soil. By holding soil in place with their root systems, by deflecting pounding rain with their canopies, and by adding nutrients with their dead leaves, trees are crucial to keeping and improving our soil.
7. Trees provide habitat for species of many kinds – from insects to possums to birds, including endangered species.
8. Trees can pay your "carbon debt". Planting just 30 trees will absorb the amount of carbon dioxide that is generated in the production of energy for the average Australian lifestyle each year.
9. Trees provide clean water and natural flood control. Forests act as natural reservoirs, and they protect watersheds, providing clean water for cities, dams and rivers.
10. Trees are a beautiful part of our lives. From striking individual trees that are of historic significance or are simply large and majestic, to a grove of trees in a city park, trees enrich our lives by simply being there. Trees are not just a key to the natural ecosystem - trees are an essential part of community life.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

February Tues 15th Social Meeting: Andrew Edwards 'Fire and biodiversity in the monsoon tropics of NT'
Andrew will be discussing the use of fire in the savannas of western Arnhemland to reduce carbon emissions.

February Sun 20th Field trip: Start at the 'Teach and Tell' site followed by a trip to the Troy (Dubbo) Sewage Treatment plant to hear about the proposed bird hide and wetland, and undertake a national shorebird survey. *Trip Leaders: Joan Rheinburger and Tim Hosking 0438 600 837*

March Sun 6th Wattle Grove Clean Up: After the floods, Wattle Grove needs some TLC! We will do a general clean up, replant wattles and groundcovers. *Trip Leader: Kerry Palmer 0427480440*

March Fri 11th Birds & Botany Trip: Venue TBA

March TUES 15th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Member's night after formalities. Consider nominating for the committee.

March Sun 20th Field trip: 'Gilgai Farms', Geurie. The property is Holistically managed under a regenerative Ecological Farming System. The focus on the triple bottom line of ecology,

NOTES FOR MEMBERS

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE!

It is that time of year again when annual subscriptions are due. Please send in to the PO Box or pay at a social meeting.

CALL FOR SOCIAL MEETING RAFFLE ITEMS

Gisela has indicated our stocks of social meeting raffle prizes is running low—if anyone has any items they could donate to be raffle prizes please let her know, or better yet—bring them to a social meeting.

FIELD NOTES CONTRIBUTIONS

If you have any articles, photographs, comments, letters or suggestions you would like to make, then send them in! Submission deadline is last Thursday of each month. Send to: The Editor, PO Box 1171, Dubbo, NSW 2830 or Email : contact@dubbofieldnats.org.au

COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2011

Please give some thought as to whether you are willing and able to get more involved *in your Club* by becoming a committee member. Current members would happily discuss what's involved.

DFNCS SOCIAL MEETINGS:

THIRD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH. ***Supper 7:00pm, Meeting 7:30pm***

Venue: Kurrajong Room, 1st Floor Community Arts Building

Western Plains Cultural Centre, cnr Gipps & Wingewarra Streets, Dubbo

MONTHLY DFNCS FIELD TRIPS:

Usually the SUNDAY FOLLOWING SOCIAL MEETINGS.

Occasionally DFN&CS hold special events & field trips, of which further details are advised in our the members' newsletter, "*Field Notes*".

'BIRDS AND BOTANY FIELD TRIPS:

EVERY SECOND FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH

Pending interest at the monthly social meeting or field trip.

