



NPA *Bulletin*

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National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc



**Launch of the
orchid book**



**Symposium a
big success**



**Gudgenby
"Bushies" birthday**



Articles by contributors may not necessarily reflect association opinion or objectives.

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Esther Gallant			

From the President

After two and a half years of waiting we were finally given a fractured glimpse in April of the new Plan of Management for Namadgi National Park. It was a very confusing process with the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment announcing a public inquiry and asking for submissions without releasing the latest draft of the Plan of Management. Finally, on 8 May the new draft was tabled in the Legislative Assembly, but at the time of going to press it was still not printed and thus not readily available.

From what we can tell it looks like we have managed to achieve some improvements to the draft plan. The values of the park have been re-ordered to place environmental values first; there is more discussion on climate change in the text; some strategies to address climate change have been added; and it now acknowledges the role of NPA ACT in the formation of the park. We understand that there will be a list of priorities at the back of the plan but no strategy for review and reassessment.

However, pressure for more horse-riding, pricey tourism and large group activities continues to grow. We need a management plan which assists park managers to do their jobs which gives them solid reasons to reject unreasonable demands for use and access. If the plan is too wishy-washy their decisions will be subject to second-guessing and political pressure all the way up the line.

The new draft wants to be all things to all people, which is a recipe for disaster. Our community needs to appreciate that Namadgi National Park is a beautiful place for low impact recreation and enjoyment, but these must be secondary to the protection of its natural values. It is a place which has to be used gently and appreciated thoughtfully.

On a more positive note, congratulations to all involved in putting on our second and very successful symposium on 9 and 10 May, *Corridors for Survival in a Changing World*. In particular, Kevin McCue did a wonderful job pulling the program together.

The speakers were outstanding and their presentations gave us a good insight into the powerful role science plays in ensuring our conservation efforts are targeted, effective and ultimately successful. Press cover was good too, which will get our conservation message out to people who couldn't get there.

A lot of hard work went into making it such a success with a number of other things tied into the weekend. The photographic display was wonderful and people really enjoyed voting for the People's Choice Awards and special thanks go to Martin Chalk for his hard work, ably assisted by Chris de Bruine.

The launch of David Jones's *Field Guide to the Native Orchids of the ACT* was another highlight. Craig Allen the ABC journalist and newsreader revealed his long term passion for orchids and David Jones inspired us with his extensive knowledge of our local orchid species.

Another highlight of the event was the announcement of the Amanda Carey Award which was shared between Martin Worthy and Anett Richter. These two young people are pursuing their studies with the same dedication and love of the environment which Amanda had and it is a pleasure to see her remembered this way.

After such an informative and enjoyable weekend we can all be very proud of what we have achieved.

Christine Goonrey

NPA leads the managers into the wilderness

Following the very successful joint tour of Kosciuszko National Park last November with NPA NSW, it was decided we would approach Namadji park management to see if we could do something similar here. Brett McNamara was enthusiastic about the idea so we invited senior managers from Territory and Municipal Services and representatives of other community organisations to come with us to discuss the big issues around management of the wilderness areas.

The most immediate concern is a proposal to widen the Mt Franklin and Cotter Hut roads to trailer standard or Category 1, which would involve significant widening and straightening of the road through the wilderness areas. However, other issues such as the restoration of the bogs, continuing

problems with feral animals, insects, weeds and vandalism are just as important.

Despite the wintry conditions, the day was very successful. We were met at Bulls Head by a NPWS ranger who explained the arrangements for cooperative management of the wilderness and northern park areas. We stopped at Mt Franklin, Pryor's Hut and other places along the Mt Franklin Road to look at water quality, heritage and recreation issues, and at what impact the fire trail proposals would have on the road.

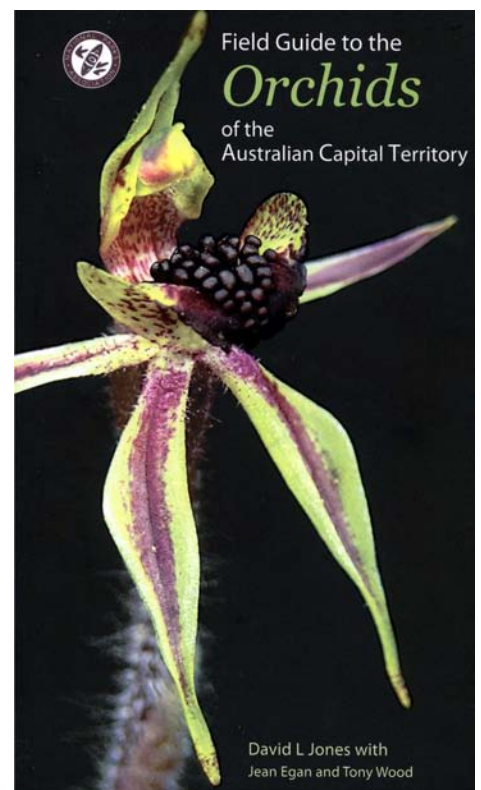
Lunch at the Cotter Hut gave us a chance to hear about the pig eradication program and to appreciate for ourselves the long history of management of the area. Since the Cotter Act of 1913 rangers have been hunting horses, cattle

and pigs out of the area to protect the source of Canberra's water supply. Now feral deer and European wasp have joined the invaders.

We all came away with a better understanding of the complex interaction of factors affecting the wilderness; fire, water, flora, fauna, culture and recreation all play a part. Perhaps more importantly we understood that these issues cannot be addressed in a single day, or by criticising or ignoring each other's opinions. We agreed that the day was part of an ongoing conversation between park managers and the community which offers our best hope of making the right decisions and conserving our precious wilderness areas. And more funds for long-term management of the perennial problems would be a big help too.

Christine Goonrey

Orchid book launch



The NPA ACT's latest publication was officially launched on 9 May at the CSIRO Discovery Centre, in conjunction with the 2008 symposium. The *Field Guide to the Orchids of the Australian Capital Territory*, is authored by David L Jones, with Jean Egan and Tony Wood.

Above left. David L Jones, principal author; at the official launch of the orchid book. Centre. Christine Goonrey with Craig Allen (ABC TV journalist and orchid fancier), who launched the book, and Craig's wife Tamsin with baby Grace at the book launch.

Photos by Michael Goonrey

NPA member wins award

NPA member Ted Fleming has been recognised as a committed park care volunteer.

Ted won the first prize in the Landcare Australia magazine's *Inspiring Australians* competition. In nominating the winning entry, a photo and caption

was produced and submitted by Steve Welch, Coordinator of the Southern ACT Catchment Group.

Ted received a copy of Marg Carroll's *Reinventing the Bush* and a \$1000 grant to support the activities of his group, Mugga Mugga Park Care.

Congratulations Ted, and Steve.

[As we go to press it has just been announced that Ted has also won the NRMA Insurance ACT Volunteer of the Year Award in the Environment category. Well done Ted! Ed.]

The 2008 NPA ACT Symposium, 9–10 May:



Most of the symposium organising committee members were at the Discovery Centre well before registrations started at 12:00 Friday afternoon to set up the registration desk, organise book sales and download speaker notes. Sonja Lenz had collected the proceedings from the printer the previous day for distribution to registrants, and photos submitted for the NPA ACT photographic competition hung on the walls of the Link Room, thanks to Martin Chalk, and his helpers. The display looked terrific.

Last minute changes to the podium communications setup were made, the new NPA ACT banner, designed and



organised by Sabine Friedrich and Chris Emery, was in place, and all was in readiness when the Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, arrived right on time at 1:00pm to open the symposium after introductions and acknowledgment to country by Christine Goonrey. Two staff from the *Canberra Times* were there.

What a shame there were so few of our members! The committee had been working on the symposium for about a year and fewer than half the registrants were members.

The quality of the presentations was very high, right from the opening speaker of Session 1 when Professor Janette Lindesay set the scene with an animated talk on global warming, spelling out predictions of the range of temperature, rainfall and evaporation changes for the ACT region.

Ian Pulsford followed with a description of the Alps to Atherton conservation corridor, A2A (but should be P2P, ie Pole to Pole corridor, according to one member of the audience). Phil Zylstra's talk on forest flammability was picked up in the *Sunday Canberra Times*

and we hope his research will be widely discussed and adopted in fire management plans.

Memorable contributions

The standard of talks continued in the following sessions with memorable contributions from Roger Good, Geoff Hope and Martin Worthy, who expanded on themes in the 2006 symposium with consideration of impacts of climate change. Core logs shown by Geoff Hope support the contention of Phil Zylstra that Aboriginal use of fire has been incorrectly interpreted and grossly distorted.

Insect and animal papers were popular with the audience; Will Osborne talked about green and golden bell frogs recently re-discovered along the Molonglo River, until then thought to have been extinct in that area. Equally, there was much interest in the papers on fires by CSIRO's Michael Doherty and Malcolm Gill. Post-2003 fire evidence seems to suggest that the bush is very resilient to natural fires (those occurring with natural frequency).

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Photos this page.

Top. NPA Symposium in progress at the Discovery Centre, CSIRO.

Left. ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, who officially opened the Symposium, with the association's new display banner. Photo Sabine Friedrich.

Right. Martin Worthy accepts his Amanda Carey Award, with joint winner Anett Richter looking on, and Mick Gentleman MLA who officially presented the awards.



Corridors for Survival in a Changing World

Sarah Sharp and Brett McNamara, representing ACT Government researchers and managers, summarised their activities and the extra workload that would be imposed in a warming, drier future. Maxine Cooper had the last word, urging us to adopt more sustainable lifestyles to support a population growing without limit.

Joint winners

Former ACT ranger Amanda Carey is remembered with an NPA ACT award in her honour for the best student contribution. The judges were split equally so both student presenters, Martin Worthy and Anett Richter, were declared joint winners, the prizes presented by Mick Gentleman MLA who kindly interrupted another function to be there.

The Orchid Book launch went without a hitch, both Craig Allen and the author, David Jones, spoke entertainingly and with great affection and enthusiasm about orchids. This new, attractive field

guide is a magnificent addition to NPA ACT's publication inventory and sales were brisk.

The venue at CSIRO Discovery Centre was excellent, morning and afternoon teas just right and the dinner well up to expectations, with lots of networking going on around the tables. We acknowledge Therese from Discovery who manages the venue.

Special thanks to the symposium organising committee: Chris Emery, Christine Goonrey, Sabine Friedrich, Judy Kelly, Sonja Lenz and Annette Smith and helpers on the day including the session chairs Christine, Judy, Chris, Clive and Beverley. Honorary Treasurer Rod Griffiths didn't stray far from the receipt book throughout, and Mike Smith, Max Lawrence, Michael Goonrey and Sabine were constantly helping, as photographers, microphone runners or audiovisual trouble-shooters.

It went very well, the Proceedings of the 2006 and 2008 symposia are a great resource for the ACT.



We thank the ACT Government for the grant that helped make it all possible.

Kevin McCue
Symposium convenor

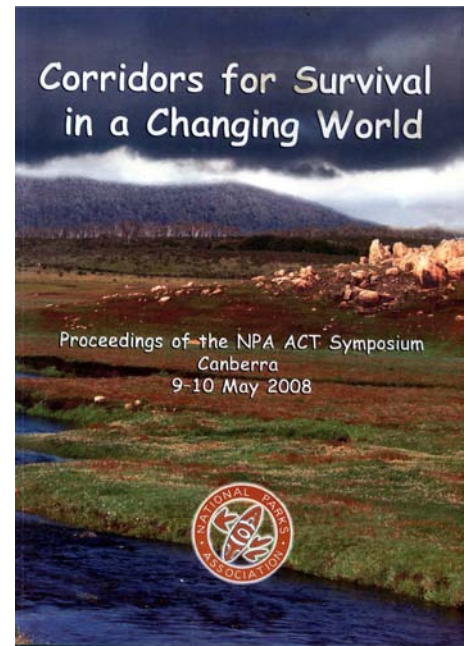


Photos this page.

Left. NPA Committee member Judy Kelly with Ann Reeves, President of the National Parks Australia Council.

Top right. Dr Maxine Cooper, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment makes her point at the symposium.

Right. Copies of the NPA Symposium Proceedings were available at the venue.



NPA ACT new subscription rates

Thank goodness the Medicare surcharge is going down!!

After many years of keeping our membership fees constant, the NPA's Executive Committee has approved slight increases in the family and single membership rates and a slight decrease in the concessional membership rate.

The new rates for 2008-09 are:

Family	\$44.00
Single	\$38.50
Concession	\$11.00
Corporate/Bulletin only	\$33.00

The new rates are a little bit more GST friendly, something the treasurer is all in favour of!

To say thank you to those non-corporate members who are significant donors to the NPA, the Committee has also decided to set a special membership fee of \$11 for those members who donate \$100 or more. This means that a family member making a donation of \$100 or more will save \$33 on their normal membership rate. Similarly, single and concessional members will save \$27.50 and \$11 respectively.

This recognition of the importance of significant financial donors brings the NPA into line with other key environmental groups, such as the Wilderness Society and the Nature Conservation Council. These organisations have had similar arrangements in place for a number of years and a special thanks to David Teather for drawing this to the Committee's attention.

Rod Griffiths
Honorary Treasurer

The Tarkine — a Tasmanian treasure



In February this year Janet and I went on a six-day, vehicle-supported trip to and through the Tarkine area of north west Tasmania. We went with the small but very professional eco-tourism company Tarkine Trails based in Hobart.

Tarkine Trails (www.tarkine-trails.com.au) describe themselves as being established in 2001 “to generate a practical and positive economic alternative to the logging and mining of one of the world’s great treasures ... since that time, Tarkine Trails have actively lobbied for the protection of the Tarkine and have donated over \$50,000 worth of walks to conservation groups aligned with this vision.”

We chose the trip option offering vehicle support, a mixture of camping and cabin accommodation, a boat trip on the Pieman River and inland and coastal day walks. Multi-day pack walk trips are also offered. We decided the “Tarkine Explorer” trip gave us the best introduction to an area none of us knew.

The Tarkine

The Tarkine, named after the Aboriginal band that lived there, is an area of north west Tasmania bounded in the north by the Arthur River and in the south by the Pieman River. To the east is the Murchison Highway, and the Southern



Ocean is to the west. Through its heart flows the Savage River.

Bob Brown, for many years an active supporter of the campaign to preserve this area, continues to warn about the dangers logging and mining are bringing to this region (see for example, *Tarkine Trails—a guide to bushwalking and rafting in Tasmania’s grand northwest wilderness*, compiled by Bob Brown, with Stephen Mattingley and Ted Mead, TWS, Hobart, 1993).

Natural values

Tim Flannery has described the Tarkine as “a sea of virginal forest, heath and button grass plains that spreads over nearly half a million hectares: all the way from the inland ranges to the wild west coast” (*Tarkine*, Ralph Ashton (ed.), Allen and Unwin, Sydney 2004).

The Australian Conservation Foundation’s current briefing paper states that “The Tarkine’s rainforests form the largest continual tract of rainforest in Australia. This is also the largest temperate rainforest in Australia” and “The Tarkine contains 54 species of flora and fauna which are listed as either threatened or endangered. The Tarkine is a refuge from which many Tasmanian endemic, threatened, migratory and vagrant species can feed, breed, disperse and recolonise other areas where their populations have fared poorly.” These include the ground parrot and orange-bellied parrot.

Cultural values

Aborigines inhabited the Tarkine for at least 37 000 years. The Australian Heritage Commission described the Tarkine as “one of the world’s great archaeological regions” due to the number and significance of the Aboriginal sites. The region is rich in European heritage, for good or more usually for bad, with early intrusions by George Augustus Robinson, prospectors, timber getters and miners.

Current status

The Tarkine is poorly protected, despite campaigning by all major conservation groups and

Photo top left. Reflections on the Pieman River.

Left. A logged coup in the Tarkine.
Photos by Tim Walsh

individuals since the 1960s. Only 5 per cent of the Tarkine’s 447 000 hectares has national park status, (the Savage River National Park, 18 000 hectares). Various forestry areas, state reserves and misnamed conservation areas make up the rest.

This patchwork of reserves does not give the Tarkine a place on any map of Tasmania and, as such, the identity and whereabouts of the region is unknown to most people. Without protection, such as World Heritage status, management and protection of the Tarkine will remain inadequate and the totality of this wonderful wilderness area will slowly lose its unique values.

Tarkine Trails and other groups have been campaigning for World Heritage listing of the Tarkine. However the logging, prospecting and mining industries are opposed to such a move and the current Tasmanian government is less than sympathetic.

The walk

The six-day walk we undertook was led by Mark Davis (known as Darvis), ably assisted by Phoebe Van Doorn. Other participants were Helen and Graham Scully, Debbie Cameron and her brother from California, Dennis Fleming. Good companions all!

We were collected in Devonport and driven, via Burnie, to our first camp at John Lynch Ridge in the south east of the Tarkine. For two nights we camped amongst the giant myrtle, sassafras and large eucalyptus including *Eucalyptus obliqua*, up to 85 metres tall and one of the tallest hardwoods on Earth. We were given a brief but comprehensive talk on safety in the bush.

Next day we did a day walk down to the Huskisson River for lunch and a swim. As we went Darvis pointed out the various types of trees we were passing and noted the mosses and lichens and listed the birds we might see and hear.

Our third night was spent in simple wooden cabins at Corinna. On the way we stopped at the historic mining town of Waratah. The nearby Mt Bischoff mine was, in 1871, the largest tin mine in the world. The day’s walk was to be to the top of Mt Donaldson from the Savage River bridge. However, low cloud meant that we only reached a viewing point two thirds of the way up. From here we were able to see the blight made on the landscape by the Savage River iron ore mine.

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Consultations on parks and reserves

Two meetings in recent weeks have attempted to bring together organisations which have an interest in the management and use of ACT parks and reserves. The first meeting was the Conservation and Wildlife Stakeholder Forum with NPA ACT, Friends of Grasslands, the Limestone Plains Group, Canberra Ornithology Group and the Conservation Council getting the opportunity to ask some of the hard questions such as:

- are the Action Plans for Threatened Species actually being implemented;
- when are we going to have a kangaroo management program;
- what is happening to management of the Lower Cotter catchment area; and
- are we going to be consulted on the review of the Nature Conservation Act?

Russell Watkinson, the Director of Parks Conservation and Lands, chaired the meeting and promised to bring answers back to the next meeting of the group.

The second meeting was for the Parks and Reserves Users' Group. NPA

ACT asked to join this group as well because of our large outings program, and it was just as well because there were no other bushwalking groups there. It was a large and diverse group including the ACT Equestrian Association, Scouts ACT, Veterans Athletics, Mountain Running and Cross Country Runners; Outward Bound, Archers ACT, Walking for Pleasure, dog sledgers and mountain bikers.

There was a surprising amount of agreement among them about what the basic problems are:

- difficulty getting access to areas since the 2003 bushfires;
- needing exclusive access to areas for their own groups at times;
- damage done to tracks by other users; and
- requiring facilities for events including car parking, toilets and hardened surfaces.

It all made bushwalking seem remarkably low impact.

Russell Watkinson told the group that Territory and Municipal Services

(TAMS) were aware of their difficulties and were going to develop an Outdoor Recreation Strategy in the next financial year which would work out what were compatible uses for public lands and how they fit in across the landscape. Such a strategy would give users more certainty for planning events and competitions and attempt to sort out competing demands.

The meetings are a positive step towards building community agreement on recreation and leisure uses of publicly managed lands, including Namadgi National Park. Their success and the success of an Outdoor Recreation Strategy will depend on the ability of such a diverse range of users to respect each other's needs and to temper their own demands to what is safe, practical and sustainable.

In the near future other stakeholders' meetings will be held for rural lessees, commercial users, and the Aboriginal community.

Christine Gooney

The Tarkine — a Tasmanian treasure *(continued from page 6)*

From Corinna we took a 1.5 hour boat trip down the rainforest lined Pieman River to its mouth passing huon pine and myrtles. On arrival at the coast we pitched tents and set off on a day walk along the coast. Along the way we heard about the various Aboriginal communities who lived on the coast and how they utilised the resources of the sea. Enormous shell middens abound.

That evening, as we listened to Darvis play his guitar around the campfire we saw our first Tasmanian devil and met a sole lobster fisherman.

Next day we returned up the river on the huon pine-made *Arcadia 2* and moved on to the coastal township of Arthur River. That evening we visited the property of local landholder and conservationist Jeff King. Jeff has stopped grazing cattle on his coastal property and has turned it into private nature reserve.

He took us on an evening walk and it is remarkable to see the way the vegetation has regenerated. The contrast with the neighbouring property where cattle grazing on the coastal dunes continues is stark. The highlight however was seeing a Tasmanian devil feeding on "wallaby road kill" Jeff had staked outside a shack we used as a hide.

Our final day was spent visiting the

spectacular Arthur River lookout, Julius River rain forest and Lake Chisholm in the northern reaches of the Tarkine.

Our meals were cooked for us, wine was served and Darvis entertained us with folk songs and snippets of Tasmanian history, human and natural.

Impressions

Our small group enjoyed themselves tremendously. Darvis and Phoebe proved expert and considerate guides. Gentle conservation messages were part of all descriptions of the biodiversity of the Tarkine. The threats posed to the area by continuing clearfell logging and mining was pointed out but did not detract from the simple pleasure of being in the bush for a few days. We saw lots of wildlife — Dennis, on his first visit to Australia was especially thrilled to see devils, an echidna, an Australian fur seal, wombats, Bennett's wallabies and pademelons, and many yellow-tailed cockatoos.

Through Darvis we gained a better understanding of the way of life of the Aborigines and the devastation wrought on them by the coming of Europeans. In moments of quiet meditation he asked us to respect the generations of people who had lived here. However his message was one of conciliation. He emphasised

the need for our generation to ensure the Tarkine is now protected and suggested that sensitive tourist development could help this.

Within days of our visit a large bushfire, started by a lost four wheel driver on the ill planned Western Explorer road, threatened the Savage River mine and the township of Corinna; thus emphasising just how important improved management of the Tarkine really is. The future of the Tarkine is a national responsibility.

Our group returned home determined to support the campaign to protect the Tarkine. To this end it is hoped to arrange for Darvis to address a meeting in Canberra later in the year.

This particular trip was not strenuous — the day walks were well within the capacity of most NPA walkers. It was designed to give an overview of the Tarkine. This it did splendidly. Our understanding of this immensely important natural area was improved enormously. Janet and I look forward to returning with Tarkine Trails to do another of their walks, perhaps the six day coastal walk or the six day Tarkine rainforest track, or both!

Timothy Walsh

Something fishy in the Cotter

Macquarie perch is a native fish species fairly common in the Murray and its tributaries until the 1980's, but now endangered. Their whole problem is that they undertake riverine spawning migrations and, unlike other species, they require flowing water to breed. Flowing water has been a very scarce commodity in recent years, with the result that the few remaining populations of the species have tended to be concentrated in the upper reaches of the river system. This includes our own Cotter River.

Brendan Ebner, Senior Aquatic Ecologist with the ACT parks service, has been deeply involved in research relating to the Macquarie perch (and other aquatic species) in the Cotter for a number of years, and gave a most interesting address on the subject to the April general meeting.

His very welcome message was one of success and optimism — not only have he and his colleagues been able to throw a lot of light on the behaviour and demographics of the Cotter population, they have actually been successful in establishing new breeding grounds for the fish (which Brendan affectionately refers to as 'Maccas') further up the Cotter. This will be particularly important for the survival of the species when the construction of the new Cotter Dam radically alters the existing habitat.

Brendan told us that Macquarie perch are very closely related to the much more common golden perch (yellowbelly). But they have a larger eye, reflecting their nocturnal nature, are darker in colour,



Macquarie perch ("Maccas").

and have a smaller mouth. Their maximum size is around 46cm and 3kg, but they tend to be smaller in the ACT. Males mature at about three years, and females (which outnumber males nine to one!) a year later.

Radio tracking

Radio tracking has shown that the bigger fish tend to have established home bases in the shallow weedbeds in the upper reaches of the Cotter Dam that they return to each day, although their nocturnal wanderings may extend for kilometres. The smaller fish tend to hang out in the deeper water of the dam, seeking the shelter of the rocky sides.

Predators include cormorants, and for the small fish, trout. The spawning migration up the Cotter River occurs once each year, usually in November–December, but in the recent warmer seasons it has begun in October. The infant fish are especially vulnerable to trout when coming downstream from the spawning grounds to the dam.

Much of the research described by Brendan was related to the construction in 2001 of a fishway at Vanities Crossing, which it was hoped would enable fish to access reaches of

the Cotter upstream of the existing causeway. However, for Maccas this did not happen immediately, and it was not until 2004 that the first were seen upstream of the fishway. In 2007 it was found that they were established at Spur Hole, 3km beyond Vanities, with fish of all sizes represented.

These developments mean that the nursery areas for Maccas are now much bigger than prior to construction of the fishway. Even better, the species seems to be doing much better than prior to the 2003 fires which appear to have impacted more heavily on their trout predators.

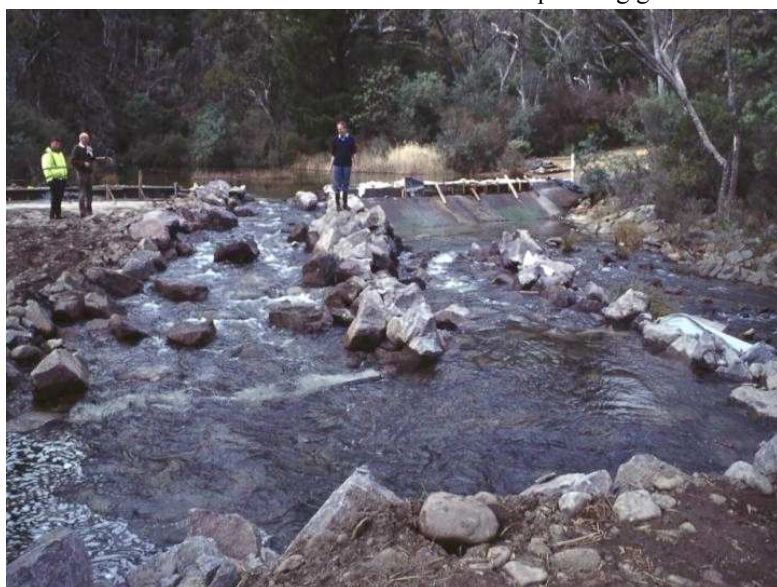
The big issue facing the Cotter's Maccas will be the expansion of Cotter Dam from its present four gegalitres to 57 gegalitres. This will take the backed-up water to not far short of the Vanities fishway. The fish will still be able to breed, thanks to the fishway, but it is to be hoped they will utilise stretches of the river even further upstream, ideally as far as Bendora Hole. This may mean construction of some additional fishways on other crossings.

The loss of the weedbeds in the existing dam used by the adult fish will be a problem, as they are unlikely to be replicated in the new dam, which will reach into steeper and rockier sections of the river. Brendan believes that placement of sections of pipe on the sides of the dam prior to its filling should provide an alternative shelter habitat for the biggies choosing to stay in the backed-up water.

These events are not without some precedent. When Googong Dam was built on the Queanbeyan River the backed-up water extended almost to Curley Falls (seems like ages since it's been up that far!). At the time fish were actually taken upstream of the falls in the hope they would breed. It took years for them to spawn, but Brendan told us that now they are.

After a stimulating talk followed by interesting discussion and a warm thankyou from Christine to Brendan, members and guests left with a nice feeling that at last there was some good news coming out of the Cotter catchment.

Max Lawrence



The Vanities Crossing fishway.

Photos supplied by Brendan Ebner.

Work starts on protection of historic sites

On 27 March 2008, Brett McNamara, Manager, Rural Region, Parks, Conservation and Lands, (responsible for Namadgi, Googong foreshores, Kowen Forest and several other areas in the ACT), and three of his rangers (Bernard Morris, Dean Darcy and Cliff Stevens) visited several of the historic sites at Glenburn/Burbong in the Kowen Forest.

They were accompanied by NPA ACT members Christine and Michael Goonrey and Col McAlister.

NPA ACT recently published Col's monograph *Twelve historic sites in the Glenburn and Burbong areas of the Kowen Forest, Australian Capital Territory*. Col followed this up with a submission to the ACT Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, seeking support for protection and preservation work at the sites. He responded positively and the joint visit was an outcome of this.

The party met at Charcoal Kiln Road on the Kings Highway near Queanbeyan and spent several hours inspecting most of the sites. The sites are rich in relics of early European pastoral activity which commenced in the area in 1831.

Col had a paper for Brett and his staff to help focus discussions on a possible works program for the 12 historic sites. During the course of the visit he briefed them on some of the sites' history and on immediate and longer term tasks that could be undertaken.

Brett and his staff were enthusiastic about their new responsibilities for the cultural heritage in this area. It adds to their previous responsibilities for the protection of sites such as the Orroral homestead and the London Bridge homestead complex.

They were keen to protect the Glenburn/Burbong sites and, although funding would be a problem for some of

the larger tasks, they identified some high priority tasks that should be able to be undertaken quickly. These included the removal of large dead trees at Glenburn homestead and the tidying up of grass and the removal of blackberries within the security fences at the Colverwell graves and Glenburn homestead.

Brett said that he looked forward to further contact with NPA ACT and Col in particular when dealing with future needs for the Glenburn/Burbong sites.

It is still early days, but Christine, Michael and Col are confident that Parks, Conservation and Lands will develop and implement a comprehensive works program "for the restoration of these important links to our past", to use Mr Stanhope's words.

The only disappointment from the meeting was that representatives from Heritage ACT did not show up.

Col followed up the visit with a letter to Jon Stanhope reporting on the meeting, requesting that he encourage the Heritage Unit to become actively involved in the project and requesting him to pass on Christine's, Michael's and Col's thanks to Brett and his staff.

Jon Stanhope responded positively again.

He indicated that action on some identified works would begin in the near future, that Bernard Morris would continue to liaise with Col to develop a program of works "to restore and sustain these cultural sites of significance" and that Bernard would maintain contact with the Heritage Unit "to ensure its



Brett McNamara (Manager, Rural Region of TAMS) at Glenburn with Col McAlister (NPA), rangers Dean Darcy, Bernard Morris and Cliff Stevens, and NPA President Christine Goonrey, 27 March 2008.

Photo Michael Goonrey

input and active participation ...".

On Friday 18 April, Fiona MacDonald Brand and Col visited the shearing shed complex, the Colverwell graves and the Glenburn homestead. They were delighted to see that some work has already been done.

At the Colverwell graves, the blackberries within the post and rail fence enclosure have been removed, most of the grass between the post and rail fence and the security fence has been cut and the ground around the posts supporting the interpretive sign has been reinforced with gravel.

At the Glenburn homestead, the branches of the dead pine tree that had fallen on the security fence have been removed and sawn up ready for disposal and the security fence is now locked to prevent stock entering the two huts.

Well done Parks, Conservation and Lands. Keep up the good work.

Col McAlister

A year of orchids by Tony Wood

At the general meeting in February nature photographer and outdoor enthusiast Tony Wood took us on a photographic journey through the seasons, illustrated by orchids found in the ACT. The diversity of ground orchids in the ACT is quite amazing with 121 known species — some of them quite rare.

The presentation included over 80 beautifully photographed orchid species, starting with the mid-winter blooming *Acianthus collinus* found on Black Mountain. Along the way we learned a bit about orchid biology and

the reason members of the *Diuris* genus are so hard to identify — they readily hybridise.

Orchids are pollinated by a variety of insects and some have evolved to mimic specific insects that are their only pollinator. In spite of this emphasis on attracting pollinators, orchids do not reproduce very successfully from seed.

The plants are long-lived and the tubers may lie dormant for years and be stimulated by fire to grow and flower. Interestingly, after the 2003 bushfires some orchids were found in areas where

they had never been reported, while others seem to have disappeared entirely, probably due to very hot fires in those areas.

Now you know there is no excuse. It is never either too hot or too cold to go looking for orchids. And if you find something you think is rare, it doesn't hurt to report the location to parks personnel.

Esther Gallant

[Tony was the principal photographer for the NPA's new orchid field guide, see back page. Ed]

African safari vignettes

NPA member Esther Gallant gave a very entertaining talk and slide presentation to the March general meeting on her recent travels in Africa. These are some highlights.



Amazing! Big animals casually walked by our open jeeps: elephants, lions, giraffes, rhinos. The animals literally came to us at our unfenced camps. In Botswana, from my tent platform I saw kudu, impala, water buck, cape buffalo, baboons, monkeys, warthogs and elephants. From our Zimbabwe camp we saw small herds of giraffes, groups of lions, a large herd of endangered sable antelope, hundreds of cape buffalo and a group of more than 70 elephants. I had wanted to go to Africa while there were still big animals to see. What we saw far exceeded my expectations.

In Namibia, we traveled by motorboat down narrow winding channels lined with tall papyrus. In shallow areas the river was filled with large water lilies. Hippos occupied the deeper pools. Seeing hippos submerged to the eyeballs from a small boat was definitely a thrill and a bit scary. Small kingfishers perched on overhanging papyrus and bee-eaters nested in the banks.

In the Okavango Delta we rode in small poled canoes. Our leisurely float was interrupted when the boatmen spotted the only lion kill of the trip. We came on the scene shortly after three lionesses brought down an adult zebra. A radio call brought the jeeps and the rest of the group to us, and we drove to within 10 metres of the feeding lions. We went back twice more to see the pride which included two very small and curious cubs.

Spotlighting drives

Spotlighting drives revealed nocturnal animals such as spring hares, several species of small cats and the amazing tiny primate, the lesser bushbaby. On one particularly exciting drive we encountered a serval (rare medium sized cat). The serval sat with her back to our jeep lights for a long time, occasionally glancing over her shoulder. It seemed to

me that she was using our lights to look for prey.

Elephants were everywhere (too many for the environment, but that is another story). In Zimbabwe we watched several herds including many calves at a large waterhole. The interactions of the adults with each other and with the calves seemed to demonstrate a real affection and concern for each other. And we watched an elephant bathing party. First they drank and splashed and sprayed from the shore. Next they went to a large mud hole that they had excavated and now continued to enlarge with their tusks. Calves rolled and sat in the mud. Adults sprayed the mud over their own backs. All of them appeared to thoroughly enjoy themselves. Back on the shore they sprayed dust over their wet backs. Now they had both insect repellent and sunscreen.

Other highlights of the trip: about 15 minutes watching a rare white rhino graze beside our jeep, small mixed herds of zebras and wildebeest always alert for predators, young baboons watching us from a tree and a cameo appearance by our only leopard on the very last game drive. Perhaps the big animals will be around for a while yet after all.

Esther Gallant

NPA photo competition

The NPA photo competition ran through April into mid May. Its objectives were many and included bringing Namadgi to those who can't or don't visit the area, raising the profile of the NPA as we approach our 50th anniversary, and to provide a source of photographs for use in the *Bulletin*. Of course, it also provided a vehicle to select images for the 2009 NPA calendar.

It's fair to say that all of these objectives were fully achieved: we have had numerous comments from the public about the places represented in the images; have ensured that Hamish McNulty, of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS), considered the images closely, as he selected the winners for the calendar; and have a stock of 91 images for future use.

During their six week "season", the images have been displayed at Macarthur House, the Namadgi Visitor Centre, one night at the April NPA meeting, the National Botanic Gardens and the CSIRO Discovery Centre.

I would like to acknowledge the

assistance provided me by all those who helped in the exacting and time-consuming setting-up at each location. In particular, Chris de Bruine's eye for balance and colour coordination was invaluable and Adrienne Nicholson's seemingly endless resourcefulness saw many a rabbit pulled from the hat (metaphorical rabbits are environmentally acceptable I'm told). I'd also like to acknowledge my wife Robyn for her assistance in helping to mat the images.

Of course, the competition would not be one without the contributions of the 18 members and two Namadgi rangers. Their interpretations of Namadgi (and occasionally the surrounding mountains within the ACT) presented a host of themes for our enjoyment. Close-up shots of beetles and flowers, sweeping landscapes and huts were all represented. A number of members enjoying the bush also found themselves immortalised. The only theme that was not represented was Aboriginal heritage — a challenge for next time.

The winners of the calendar com-

petition were: Chris Whitelaw with three images, Dave Whitfield (a Namadgi ranger), Judy Kelly and Liz Harman each with two images and Esther Gallant, Sabine Friedrich, Christine Goonrey and yours truly, each with one image.

Additionally, two other competitions were conducted within the period that the images were on public display:

- A members' award was conferred on Chris de Bruine after the images were viewed at the April NPA meeting. That image is on the front cover of this *Bulletin*.
- A peoples' choice award was determined during the course of the 2008 NPA symposium. The winner was Christine Goonrey. The three runners-up were Dave Whitfield, Andrew Morrison (also a Namadgi ranger) and Judy Kelly. Highly commended awards were given to Sabine Friedrich, Esther Gallant, Kevin McCue, Chris Whitelaw and yours truly.

Martin Chalk

Gudgenby — ten years of regeneration



Photos from 11 July 1998. Above left. Under the supervision of ranger Steve Welch, Frank Clements sows seed in a scrape. Also in the photo: extreme left Martin Chalk, with Stephen Johnston standing behind Frank, and Joan Goodrum at right. Centre. Urban Affairs Minister Brendan Smyth watches Esme Curtis plant a seedling for the pioneer settlers. Right. Clive Hurlstone enjoys his first of many plantings.

Photos by Syd Comfort

The first work parties of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group were held on 11 and 12 July, when the weather was favourable. After a heavy frost, both days were fine, with a light breeze in the afternoon. Thirty three people attended on the Saturday and nine on Sunday.

Saturday's work began with some symbolic plantings. First the Minister for Urban Affairs, Brendan Smyth, planted a seedling on behalf of the ACT Government, then Esma Curtis planted one for the white settlers in the area, then Clive Hurlstone for the NPA, planted one to represent the public's interest in the project, and Joan Goodrum planted one on behalf of the Ngannawal people. Then the workforce dispersed to tackle the five different tasks of the weekend — building the first enclosure, sowing seed into prepared ground, broadcasting seed, collecting and burning unopened pine cones, and training in water quality testing.

The year was 1998 and the then Secretary of the newly formed Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group, Eleanor Stodart, wrote an account of the group's initial work party in the *NPA Bulletin* from which the above extract is taken.

In the intervening 10 years the remaining pines in the old Boboyan Plantation have been felled and nearly 400ha have been replanted to native vegetation. This has been achieved

through cooperative work by the Parks Service and other government agencies, and community organisations, principally the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group, with assistance from the Natural Heritage Trust.

The pine plantation had been established in the mid 60s but after the area was incorporated into the Gudgenby Nature Reserve and subsequently into Namadgi National Park when it was declared in 1984, the plan of management required that the area be regenerated to its native condition. This operation had been strongly advocated by the National Parks Association which has continued to vigorously support the work.

When the regeneration was launched there were few comparable projects for reference so there was uncertainty about the nature and extent of problems that may be encountered. How much pine regeneration would result from seed from the felled trees? Would planting of seedlings or direct seeding yield best results? Would new growth be severely curbed by cropping by rabbits and roos? What would be the best procedure for direct seeding? What would be the extent of weed competition? To assist in providing answers wire-netting ex-

closures were erected and a research student, Chris Webb, conducted his research project in the area. The 2003 bushfires were another threat to the regeneration, but fortunately the damage was not extensive.

Overall regeneration of the area has been achieved but with some areas better covered and with more advanced growth than others. Control of weeds remains a major concern and as action to date has concentrated on trees, consideration can be given to encouraging growth of under-storey plants.

Association members are invited to inspect the regeneration area with members of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group to help mark 10 years of effort and perhaps find answers to some of the questions posed above. Please join the group and celebrate its tenth anniversary on Saturday July 12. Details of the occasion are set out in the invitation on page 18.

Syd Comfort

A recent photo of regeneration in the Hospital Creek area, showing well-grown trees on the slopes. Photo by Adrienne Nicholson



Light to light walk: 9–12 March 2008



Boyd's Tower to Green Cape Lighthouse

Walkers: Neville Esau (Leader), Esther Gallant, Judith Webster, Peter Anderson-Smith, David Large, Max Lawrence, Pete Tedder (author).

Itinerary: 9 March, meet at Saltwater Creek Campsite.

10 March, position cars at Boyd Tower and Green Cape; day walk from Boyd Tower back to Saltwater Creek campsite.

11 March, pack walk to Bittangabee Bay camp site.

12 March, pack walk to Green Cape and return home.

Location: Ben Boyd National Park, south of Eden and Twofold Bay.

Access: Snowy Mountains Highway, 4½ hours travel from Canberra, inclusive of stops.

The walk started out OK because we had pies at Bemboka. After all, a bushwalk is more than just trudging through the bush—it is a combination of many experiences, including the eating: like pastry at Nimmitabel, milk shakes and hamburgers at the now defunct Alpine Café in Cooma and huge hamburgers at

Nerriga.

Max, Peter A-S and myself started late, leaving Canberra on Sunday 9 March at 5:00pm to join the others at Saltwater Camp Site in Ben Boyd National Park. We arrived at 9:30pm and were greeted sleepily from their tents by the advance guard. We pitched camp in the dark, avoiding the wallabies grazing nocturnally amongst the campers. The next morning our leader briefed us on his plans: today we position the cars and walk from Boyd's Tower back to Saltwater, a distance of 13.2km, where we slept once more.

A separate sealed path with excellent interpretive plates leads from the car park to Boyd's Tower. Built in the 1840s the tower is still in good condition but cannot be scaled. Underneath its ramparts, its builder declares his confidence with his name cut into the stone in letters 300–500mm high. It is worth visiting to learn and imagine the life of the whalers. The Park Service has constructed two lookouts, with excellent views north and south along the coast, with interpretive notes on the red sedimentary rock cliffs stretching to the south. These cliffs extend all the way to the Cape.

Neville, Max and Esther drove off to leave the cars at the Cape. This left David, Judith, Peter A-S and myself as a lead group walking ahead. The track starts immediately from the car park. We set off at 9:30am, walking south

through thick leptospermum stands in warm cloudless weather and a brisk nor-easter. Frequent wide seascapes were interspersed with sheltered tunnels through tea tree and casuarinas.

The walk is undulating as it descends into small gullies, with thicker vegetation and sometimes with water, before climbing to the sandy ridge tops covered with low heath. Along the length of the walk, navigation is simple with clear signs, sometimes along 4WD tracks. The track is well benched and stepped; it should present no trouble to the average walker, although occasional patches of rock are encountered in creek lines and along some beaches.

Leatherjacket Creek, a bush camping site with adequate water and a rocky beach, was found at 11:30am after 4.7km and we paused for photos.

About 500m from Mowarry Point, 7.8km from Boyd's Tower, we came upon a parked vehicle just before a small creek crossing with adequate water. Two muscular young men passed on X-country bikes, carrying their bikes across the creek. Climbing the hill, we came upon a very large grassy clearing and moved to shade underneath coastal banksias for lunch at 12:30pm.

It was an idyllic spot as our view wandered over seascape, the beach beneath us and the imposing headland of red rock which we inspected following lunch. A grassy ledge behind the beach at Mowarry Point is an attractive bush camping site in good weather but fresh water is 500m away.

Leaving Mowarry Point just before 2:00pm, we spoke briefly with Neville, Esther and Max before they moved off to inspect the point. Saltwater Creek was reached comfortably at 3:30pm and we refreshed ourselves in the lagoon and

(continued next page)



Photos this page. Top. Saltwater Creek. Left. Neville Esau enjoys the view back to Boyd's Tower.

Light to light walk: 9–12 March 2008 *(continued)*

surf before the usual cuppa. This campsite is one of only two legal sites for cars, (the other is Bittangabee) and is set in trees behind the long beach. Tidal lagoons curve around both ends and the site has lots of natural beauty. Regrettably, this camp site needs time to allow the vegetation to regenerate. The park service has already cordoned off large sections and the individual camp sites are crowded with cars. Long drop toilets and tank water are on site with the usual warning that the tank water is not suitable for drinking.

On Tuesday, 11 March, we walked through to Bittangabee (9.5km) taking our time, lunching at Hegarty's bush camping site on the way. Hegarty's is an attractive grassed site with a creek and the beach close by. The weather and terrain were repeats of yesterday and equally enjoyable.

As we neared Bittangabee, the track breaks out to the cliff lines and grand views north and south greeted us before we turned sharply into the deeply indented and sheltered bay. Several power boats were anchored off and it took little imagination to bring to the mind's eye the whaling pinnacles of the Imlay Bros (1830s) and coastal steamers re-supplying the lighthouse 6km away.

The track enters a stand of tall timber full of tinkling bellbirds and lush undergrowth as it falls slowly to cross the beautiful full flowing Bittangabee Creek before it rises to the official campsite situated on the southern headland, about 15 minutes' walk away. This campsite is in good condition with a picnic shed, BBQ and toilets. The extensive grassy walk-in camp sites were a pleasant change from Saltwater Creek. Trailers and caravans are banished to the stony sites at the entrance.

The afternoon was spent enjoying the several heritage sites

associated with the park, namely the ruins of the Imlay Bros homestead and the Lighthouse store. All construction material was landed at Bittangabee Bay and sent by a horse-drawn, 6km tramway made of local hardwood overland to the construction site on Green Cape. Until 1927 this tramway was also the method of re-supply, and a storehouse, still standing, was constructed. At low tide, after a refreshing bath in the cascades of the creek, I returned to the camp along the rocky shoreline.

Despite the well patronised car camping spots, we were rewarded with many sightings of the native fauna: sea eagles, ospreys, huge lace monitors, one tiger snake, eastern grey kangaroos and brown wallabies. A more relaxed walker would be richly rewarded by the birding opportunities.

The following morning (12 March), we had only 6km to travel, so it was a leisurely and happy mob that meandered along the track. I personally enjoyed the rich floral diversity of the heath. Along the way we diverted to the impressive Pulpit Rock, only 500m off the track, which is accessible to cars. Near the cape, a notice led us to the bush cemetery for those that did not survive the wreck of the *SS Ly-ee-moon* in 1886. It is ironic and sad that the wreck must have occurred around the time that the lighthouse was completed. Our arrival was at 11:45am.

Earlier in my life, I was fortunate to indulge in coastal cruising and from that have a personal attachment to lighthouses. From the mariner's viewpoint, lighthouses manned by hardy individuals

who enjoyed solitude and the natural world were, somehow, kindred spirits in the important task of providing safety and security to the yachtsman. And their architecture — gracious, stark, monumental, sturdy — gave visual impact to their task.

But now that era is past: an unmanned light stuck high on an unattractive and strictly functional steel tower, fed by huge PV banks is hardly romantic. In light drizzle we lunched in the lee of the cape before crowding into two cars for the drive back to Boyd's Tower. We collected the remaining car and set off home, watchful as huge timber jinkers thundered past from the tree abattoirs on the southern cape of Twofold Bay.

The diverse flora and fauna, the wide seascapes, the human stories implicit in the tower and Bittangabee, the tragedy of the *Ly-ee-moon* — all these aspects combine to make the Light to Light Walk a thoroughly enjoyable experience. It is only 30km and, though undulating, has no steep grades. It is well within the limits of a beginner taken over two nights. An alternative plan would be to start at Green Cape and bush camp at Hegarty's and Mowarry, both of which were adequately watered on this trip. An adventurous family might even take their children on this walk, stopping as we did at the car-accessible campsites where they could cache food and other stuff.

We said our goodbyes at Bemboka and, of course, completed the experience by having a ritual pie.

Pete Tedder

The Gang of Seven:

David Large
Neville Esau (leader)
Max Lawrence
Esther Gallant
Peter Anderson-Smith
Judith Webster
Pete Tedder

Photo by Pete Tedder



Caring for the ACT's rarest tree

When the new edition of NPA's *Field guide to the Native Trees of the ACT* was being prepared one of the questions asked was "Have there been any discoveries of tree species not formerly known to naturally occur in the ACT since the last edition." The answer was yes, a single specimen of *Eucalyptus alba* destroyed in the January 2003 bushfire and a single specimen of the river red gum, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, that although damaged in the bushfire had survived.

E. camaldulensis is the most widely distributed eucalyptus species in Australia, found over most of the continent west of the Great Dividing Range except at higher altitudes. The ACT example, first tentatively identified by Ian Brooker in 1975, is located in a small enclosure next to Spring Station Creek and the Naas Road, approximately 1km north of the Namadgi Visitor Centre. The tree has a history of survival having regrown with multiple trunks from the lignotuber centuries ago after the original trunk was damaged or killed, probably by fire.

After the location was drawn to our attention we could see the enclosure needed clearing of weeds and a bit of regular attention. Others, including members of Friends of Grasslands (FOG), thought so too.

At an on-site meeting on 1 April with Namadgi rangers Bernard Morris and Louisa Roberts, with Geoff Robertson, Peter Ormay and Ian Brooker from FOG,



The grand old river red gum has been freed. One of the many truck loads of African box thorn and other weeds being loaded from over the fence.
Photo Adrienne Nicholson

and Laurie Adams and Clive Hurlstone from the NPA, it was decided to hold a work party to remove the woody weeds and other weeds using methods that would not damage the tree and to take the weed material from the site.

Of the five other small trees on the site and adjacent road verge, three were identified as *E. camaldulensis*.

After canvassing regular volunteers with NPA and Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group two dates were chosen — Saturday 5 April and Wednesday 9 April. The Saturday morning was spent cutting large African box thorn shrubs and a few sweet briar, and painting the stumps with the herbicide glyphosate, then stacking the very thorny material next to the fence for removal. The afternoon was spent chipping out African love grass and phalaris tussocks and other pasture weeds and heaping up

this material, and spraying paspalum, Paterson's curse and sorrel outside the root zone of the tree.

Wednesday began with loading the park service truck with box thorn to be dumped at a burn site. There were four more truck trips through the day with Ranger Louisa dropping by to check how things were going. More African love grass and phalaris tussocks were removed, the fence line weeds sprayed and the roadside verge tidied up.

Thanks to Ranger Louisa for keeping us on task and Mick and Rob the Park General Service Officers who handled truck loads of

very thorny plants. Thanks to Geoff and Margaret from FOG and Adrienne, Brian, Christine, John, Judy, Kevin, Martin, Michael, Phil, Sonja, and Syd from NPA who came for one or both days.

Some comments from the volunteers over the two days.

"Why don't we have morning tea breaks on other NPA work parties in Namadgi?"

"It's quite a change to work in an area no larger than 3 house blocks."

"These plants do have long thorns!"

Another work party is planned for spring to check the effectiveness of the box thorn treatment and to remove developing weeds.

Clive Hurlstone

Tidbinbilla to Bendora Dam via Mt Domain

On Saturday 3 May 2008 John Evans and I were co-leaders in a joint NPA/Canberra Bushwalking Club cross-over walk between Bendora Dam and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. My group of four walkers started at Fishing Gap carpark at 7:35am (early entry into the nature reserve had been organised) and three hours later we were on the top of Mt Domain.

As we enjoyed our morning tea on a perfect sunny day we tried to spot John's party of five walkers heading up the spur from Bendora Dam. We could not see them, but later I found out that at this

time they were probably having their morning tea on SH1266 about 3km to the west.

Just before 11:00am we headed north for about 500m to where the spur to Bendora joins Tidbinbilla Range. As we made our way down the spur towards SH1239 it soon became apparent that it was going to be a slow trip. This was due to patches of regrowth and rocky areas requiring careful footwork.

We had lunch at 12 noon and then soon after resuming, whilst passing through the thickest patch of regrowth yet, we met John's group heading up the

spur. They had been walking for about four hours, so we estimated that we would reach Bendora at about 5:00pm.

Mixed messages

We received mixed messages about the terrain ahead, with one person (who we later named "the pessimist") saying it was all thick regrowth like what were standing in, and another, ("the optimist"), saying there were patches of regrowth but the final 2km was "beautiful" forest.

(continued page 15)

The bush in our backyard

Living in the bush capital has many positives and a few negatives. Mid morning this week as I sat at the computer a loud commotion from many small birds drew me to the window. At first I was shocked to see what looked like a red wattlebird in the nearest acacia holding a small flapping bird in its beak with chattering little-brown-jobs milling about.

Flipping through the copy of the NPA ACT's *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT* in my mind, I realised with a shock that this was no honeyeater but a young butcherbird, so I dived for my camera. This was my first sight of a butcherbird in the ACT.

By the time I changed the camera lens the captive bird was dead, all its milling family and friends had dispersed, and it had been expertly hung in a fork of the acacia. The hunter quickly started to remove its feathers. Not quickly enough though; an alert pied currawong, no doubt drawn by the chorus of alarm calls from the flock, darted in and stole the booty scaring off the butcherbird in the process. The currawong cast a yellow-shot eye in my direction and then left hurriedly. Life and death in the suburbs.

Only when I downloaded the images did I recognise the little brown job was a silvereye, our copy of the NPA ACT's field guide identified the killer as a juvenile grey butcherbird. I felt elated at finally having spotted one, but more than a little sad for the silvereye.

Another positive — we were intrigued with Sonja's recent find of a strange skink in the leaf litter beside our driveway. A quick delve into the NPA ACT's fieldbook *Reptiles & Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory* came up with a three-toed skink which you will surely agree is confirmed by the

photo. The field guide comments that the species is widespread and fairly common throughout the ACT with the exception of urban Canberra.

Blue-tongued lizards regularly pass through our backyard, though we will them to stay. Many times over we are delighted about living so close to a bush corridor along the Aranda ridge linking us to the Black Mountain Reserve.

Many avian visitors

Many other avian visitors pass through our yard in the flitting shapes of a golden or rufous whistler (no, not together), and on another day, a grey thrush, yellow robin, grey fantail, a pair of spinebills and other unidentified honeyeaters and numerous silvereyes, all in one large loose flock.

Some of these photos are on the NPA ACT website under galleries/ACT Birds or Flora and Fauna. We are very grateful that Liz Harman has shared some of her magnificent bird photos with us, as you will find if you delve into the photo gallery. Yours too would be welcome, via email or a CD.

Following my article in the June 2006 *Bulletin* I was taken to task by a member of NPA ACT for criticising non-native-pet owners. He is right that many, perhaps most, owners are responsible and keep their animals in their own backyard or on a leash when out for a stroll. The owners of the cats that kill the skinks and native birds in our backyard, and the dogs that chase the kangaroos around the snow gums in the Canberra



Nature Park are the odd ones that give a bad name to all.

The member's letter led me to investigate the responsibilities of pet owners in the ACT and I was appalled to discover that cat owners do not even have to register their pets. The ACT Government obviously recognises the predation of native wildlife by cats because they have imposed a curfew for cat owners in the new suburbs of Forde and Bonner, so why not throughout the ACT? We could start with suburbs that are adjacent to Canberra nature parks and reserves like Aranda, but we need to do it soon.

As for the negatives, the character of Aranda is alas changing, the sound of chain saws has replaced mowers on a weekend, new residents either clear the block and fill it with house or cut down the eucalypts, destroying the nesting hollows of possums, parrots, owls, gang-gangs and international travellers such as the dollar birds. Vale the bush capital.

Kevin McCue

Tidbinbilla to Bendora Dam via Mt Domain *(continued)*

We continued our slow progress occasionally admiring the views to Tidbinbilla Mountain to the north, Corin Dam to the south and Cow Flat Creek to the north-west. The few uphill sections seemed to be easier than the downhill sections so we made reasonable progress in climbing the 120m up to SH1266. Here we had afternoon tea and enjoyed rare views down to Bendora Dam.

Our progress down the spur was about 1km/h and we had about 2km to go, with sunset at about 5:20pm. It was after 3:00pm now but we knew we had the "beautiful" forest ahead of us so

progress was going to be good. Unfortunately, it wasn't good going as we encountered another large area where it was rocky underfoot and I was too busy looking at my feet to see how beautiful the forest was. In these areas I think it's easier to walk uphill than down — but that wasn't going to help us get to Bendora before dark.

We eventually reached an old vehicle track which would lead us in a round-about way down to the dam. However, after about 50m it became difficult to follow as it was overgrown and the setting sun was behind the range. We

decided to take the direct route which was only 300m but very steep, and eventually made it to the road which would take us to the car. We were lucky to meet the road where we did because a bit further to the south we would have had a cliff between us and the road, or we could even have come down on the wrong side of a high barbed wire fence. We arrived at the car at 5:35pm — 10 hours after starting the 12km walk.

Participants: Trevor, Karen and Gemma in my party. Max, Zabeta, Lois and Chris in John's party.

Mike Bremers

Gulf Bend to Love Nest and back

Walk: Murrumbidgee Gulf, 16 March 2008.

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Chris Paterson, Kevin McCue, Sonja Lenz, Val Oliver, Toni Ward (6).

Weather: Fine, very warm, occasional breeze.

Leader's Comments: When I conducted this walk mid-April 2007 it was as a loop from Gulf Bend to Love Nest and return as there were too few starters for a car shuffle. An excellent outing, but could it be improved upon as a through walk? Maybe, but not at this attempt.

We were off to a good start, namely, with sufficient numbers for a shuffle. The plan was to park a car at the northern end of Murrumbidgee River Fire Trail, another at Gulf Bend, to the south. We departed Kambah Village at 7:15am, but were delayed when I ran over a small kangaroo just past Fitz's Hill. It staggered beyond a barbed wire fence

where it probably bled to death. A dawdling utility, passed earlier, reclaimed the lead, and we ate dust to Bolaro. The only consolation was that, unbeknown to the ute driver, a length of poly piping dropped from his load.

So we arrived at Gulf Bend behind schedule and I took a car load up Pockets Hut Fire Trail, looking for our start point. This took longer than expected as Murrumbidgee River Fire Trail was not signposted, and thinking it would be easy to identify, I had not done the obvious — like keeping tabs on distances.

Anyhow, we moved off in two groups, one at 10:30am, the second at 11 am and it was a downhill stroll through lovely forest with plenty of lizards rustling about, including a tiny dragon whose disguise Sonja penetrated. The groups did not meet until Murrumbidgee River, beyond the turn off to Love Nest; indeed, the first group had already waded to the other side. They

were happy to climb back up the hill to Love Nest for lunch. Everyone, except the leader, thought the hut was a dump!

Lunch finished at 1 pm and we returned to the river and went on to Pedens Hut for a group photo and a brief look around. Helichrysums were flowering in large bands. Afternoon tea was a view to Townsend Hut; the trip to it was deleted to make up time. The too-warm day left us slightly dehydrated by the time we got to the car at Gulf Bend at 3:20pm. We then retrieved the second car.

The bakery at Adaminaby was closed so we adjourned for cold drinks and crisps at the pub which, apart from the blaring TV, was a welcome antidote to the heat. Kevin and Sonja stayed for a meal at the pub before camping in the mountains. We took the highways to Cooma and Kambah, arriving at 7:01pm. I finally relaxed.

Brian Slee

PARKWATCH

Macquarie Marshes update

The good rainfall over Macquarie Marshes in late December wetted the soil profile and caused good flooding in the core area of the wetland. This triggered a colonial waterbird breeding event with 2,000 greater and intermediate egrets nesting. A number of duck species and magpie geese have also taken advantage of the good breeding condition.

An environmental water release in early January, a follow-up release in mid-February, and more local rainfall events, have all secured the flood event until May. This will give the egrets the opportunity to fledge and forage. A total of 22,000 million litres of environmental allocation was released to support this bird breeding event. For the first time, water purchased under the NSW Government Riverbank scheme was available plus a small volume purchased by the Central West Catchment Management Authority.

Although these events have brought some species back from the brink, major flooding is needed right across the Murray Darling Basin to bring wetland and rivers back to health for the long term.

National Parks Journal, April-May 2008

Stand for last rock wallabies

A brush tailed rock wallaby, "Roxy" by name, is the last female in a shrinking

colony on the Shoalhaven River.

The southern rock wallaby is considered a sub-species. The situation is desperate, so another female and two males were brought in from Cessnock to build up the colony numbers, despite the impact on the genetic diversity.

The Shoalhaven colony has been the subject of a recovery program for 3 years but this has not stopped the loss of numbers from foxes, dogs, hunters and competition from goats.

We hope that the introduction of new genetic stock and the flush of growth with all the summer rain will give this colony a fighting chance.

Colong Bulletin No 225 march 2008

Why we need wilderness

Humans are relentlessly taking over the Earth, tearing down ecosystems to create food in our quest for endless growth. In the process we are driving most of our fellow species towards extinction.

Between 1800 and 2000 the global population increased six fold. The global economy expanded fifty fold and energy consumption increased 40 fold. Thirty to fifty percent of the earth land surface is now occupied and exploited for farming, forestry and mining. In addition most of these changes have been caused by the 25% of people who live in affluent industrial nations.

Does any of this matter? Why should we care if plants and animals vanish in remote areas that we will never visit?

1. Rainforest. The destruction of rainforests will accelerate global warming.
2. Ecosystem services. Ecosystems around the world provide nutrient cycling, soil formation, water purification and oxygen formation. Over half of the ecosystems are now operating in a degraded state worldwide.
3. Oceans. Half of the oxygen we breathe comes from ocean phytoplankton. Pollution and warming can kill phytoplankton.
4. Coral reefs. These provide large amounts of food for humans and buffer coastlines against erosion. Reefs are now in danger of disappearing.
5. Medicine. Rainforests are warehouses for potential proteins and enzymes which offer a variety of medicinal advances. Many of the untested plants may vanish before we find out what they could have done for medicine.

How can we combat this trend? By increasing reserves around the world. Protect the remaining wilderness areas as biodiversity arks and create links and corridors between them.

Colong Bulletin No 225 march 2008

PARKWATCH

(continued)

NPWS restructure

The Parks and Wildlife Division of the Department of Environment and Climate Change (known also as National Parks and Wildlife Service) was reorganised on 1 March 2008.

All the branches (Northern, Western, Southern and Central) will now be part of a new Park management division headed by Bob Conroy, (former Central Branch Director) rather than directly reporting to the Parks and Wildlife Division Deputy Director-General.

In announcing the restructure, PWD Deputy Director General, Sally Baines, stated that it would help “enhance our focus on sustainable tourism and business partnerships, respond to pressures on parks such as climate change, improve consistency of management and better integrate terrestrial and aquatic reserve policy”.

National Parks Journal, April-May 2008

Wild places under threat

A report from the USA suggests that fewer people are visiting National Parks, State Parks and other public lands in the USA, Spain and Japan, threatening the future of wilderness areas.

A US study suggests that evidence points to a general shift away from people’s participation in nature-based recreations. The cultural shift away from nature recreation appears to extend outside of the US, to at least Japan, and the decline appears to have begun in 1981-1991. The root cause may be videophilia.

Videophilia is described as a “preference for indoor media activities”, but the report also suggests other factors in the decline could include fuel prices, foreign travel, extreme outdoor recreation, family incomes, government funding and park capacity (overcrowding).

If the report findings are correct, then there could be crucial implications for current conservation efforts. Other research shows that environmentally responsible behaviour results from direct contact with the environment and that people must be exposed to natural areas as children if they are to care about them as adults. Extended periods spent in natural areas, as well as creating a role model, seem to create the most environmentally responsible behaviour. Moreover, as today’s adult role models spend less time in nature, this generation of children is also likely to follow suit.

Tgo April 08

Canning Stock Route Centenary

The Canning Stock Route is almost 100 years old. In 1906 Alfred Canning set off with eight men and 23 camels carrying tons of water, food and boring equipment for a round trip that would take the next 2 years – the task to find a stock route between Wiluna and the Kimberley in the north-west of Western Australia. For some years the Kimberley cattle men had been lobbying the government to provide a means to get their stock to the ever expanding Goldfields markets. This long overland journey also seemed to be the best solution for ridding their cattle of ticks, an affliction that otherwise prevented them from travelling south by ship. Canning’s quest was a success, the stock route was developed and infrequently for the next 50 years, stock were driven from well to well on what would have been the longest, most isolated and challenging stock routes in the world. After the last drive of 1956 the stock route languished and became little more than a fading dotted line on the maps.

Trust News Vol 1 no 3 February 2008

Australia’s Antarctic heritage

Australia’s Antarctic connections predate federation but it is Dr Douglas Mawson’s Australian Antarctic Expedition of 1911 to 1914 for which he was knighted and the 1929-1932 British Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition which most powerfully demonstrated Australia’s substantial interests in Antarctica and laid the foundation for Australia’s territorial claim over 42% of the continent.

The huts and artefacts at Cape Denison are the most significant tangible remains of the earlier expedition — the Main Hut, Magnetograph House, the ruined Absolute Magnetic Hut and Transit Hut, together with a memorial to Ninnis and Mertz who died [on that expedition].

It is essential that Mawson’s Huts and the enterprising spirit that they embody are valued, protected and understood. Just as Sir Douglas Mawson achieved what he did with both government backing and the support of private companies and benefactors, the Australian Antarctic Division is working closely with the Mawson’s Huts Foundation to conserve the historic values of the site. As we approach the centenary of the AAE, it is ever more important that the achievement and

physical remains of the AAE, and all that they mean to us as a nation, are conserved and celebrated.

The Australian Antarctic Division, in accordance with Commonwealth legislation is currently preparing management plans for the places it manages on the National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists and will continue to manage its heritage places to protect, conserve, present and transmit their values to all generations of Australians.

Trust News Vol 1 no 2 November 2007

Hong Kong legacy

If there is a colonial legacy that has been absolutely positive, it is the network of country parks that now cover 38% of Hong Kong’s land mass. Without them, the city, with its fug and fumes, would be barely breathable and liveable. This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the opening of the first parks at Shing Mun, Tai Tam and near Lion Rock. So it is worth remembering and celebrating what many of us have taken for granted — a successful system of law, recreational services and ecological management that has preserved and protected 41,582 hectares, and their fauna and flora for us to enjoy.

On any given weekend, thousands of families leave behind the hustle and bustle of the city to go hiking, biking, camping and picnicking in the great outdoors, accessible via a highly efficient and affordable public transport system. Together the parks draw more than 12 million visitors a year.

Despite the city’s undeserved reputation as an urban concrete jungle, the government, with widespread public support, has over three decades maintained 23 country parks against the encroachment of rapid urbanisation, property development and population growth. Developers may be among the most powerful constituencies in Hong Kong, but even they understand that any property project which threatens to occupy even a small corner of a country park will provoke an intense public backlash.

Dr Wong Fook-ye, assistant director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation, said the people of Hong Kong should be proud of their achievements in terms of land protection.

South China Morning Post August 07

Submitted by Stephen Johnston WA

Compiled by Hazel Rath

NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar				
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
<i>Public holidays</i>	<i>Mon 9</i>			
General meetings	Thur 19	Thur 17	Thur 21¹	Thur 18
Committee meetings	Tues 3	Tues 1	Tues 5	Tues 2
Gudgeny Bush Regeneration ²	Sat 14	Sat 12 ³	Sat 9	Sat 13
Further details: 1 NPA Annual General Meeting .				
	2 Yankee Hat car park 10:00am contact Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592(h) 0407 783 422(mob).			
	3 GBRG celebrates the 10 th anniversary of their first work party.			

General Meetings

**Third Thursday of the month
(not December or January)**

8:00pm

**Uniting Church hall
56 Scrivener Street
O'Connor**

TENTH ANNIVERSARY


The President and members of the
GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP
invite members of the
National Parks Association of the ACT
to attend a morning tea to mark 10 years of
progress in the regeneration of the Gudgenby area.
We will meet at the Yankee Hat carpark at
10:30 am
Saturday 12 July
for a short tour of the site followed by morning tea
in the nearby Forest Hut.
RSVP: Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422
cjhurls@bigpond.net.au
or Hazel Rath 4845 1021

New members

The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:

Peter Anderson-Smith	John Mahlberg
Angela Delhunty	Catherine and Chris Ikin
Cheryle Hislop	Liz and Ian Harman
Wayne and Judy Ryan	Alan and Susan Robertson
Jennifer Engle	Howard and Libby Viccars
Steven and Jill Small	John Evans
Chris and Elizabeth Whitelaw	
Mike Hettinger and Donna Trucillo	
Maria Mulvaney and Susie MacLeman.	

We look forward to seeing these members at NPA a activities.

	<p>The NPA ACT website is hosted by our generous sponsor, Encode.</p>
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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members of the association are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting to be held at the Uniting Church Hall, O'Connor at 8:00pm on
Thursday 21 August 2008

Business: Minutes of the 2007 AGM President's report
Financial report Appointment of auditor
Election of office-bearers and committee
Any other business.

Note. All office-bearer and committee positions become vacant at the AGM.

Nominations for the ensuing year are welcome. Use copies of the form below to nominate members for office-bearer and committee positions for the coming year.
Following the formal business and guest speakers, members are invited to the traditional AGM supper.

For sale. Tent for comfortable car camping. French-made (André Jamet) ~1980, little used. Approx 200 X 275 cm X standing room height; sleeping area (2-4 people) with floor. Internal metal frame. Additional attached front awning. \$100 Beverley Hammond 6288 6577.

Front cover photographs

Main photo. *Chris de Bruine's "Narrow-leaf Bitter Pea (Daviesia mimosoides) on Mt Coree", winner of the Members' Choice award in the NPA Namadgi photo competition (see page 10).*

Insets. *Author David Jones with Tony Wood and Jean Egan at the launch of their orchid book. Photo Michael Goonrey. Symposium convenor Kevin McCue at the podium. Gudgenby bush regeneration gets under way in July 1998. Photo Syd Comfort.*

Nominations for NPA ACT committee members and office-bearers for 2008–09

Nominations are sought for committee members and office-bearers for the election to be held at the
Annual General Meeting on August 21

We nominate **for the position of** **of the NPA ACT for 2008–09**

Proposed by (signature)

Seconded by (signature) I accept the nomination (signature)

..... (date)

[This form can be photocopied and used for nominations.]

General Meetings

Thursday 19 June

Climate change and human and fire signatures in our swamps and floodplains.

Geoff Hope: Professor,

Department of Archaeology and Natural History, College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU.

Some reflections on the reasons why organic peats and alluvial sediments sometimes pile up in the landscape and what kind of message they contain.

Thursday 17 July

Tackling Indian Mynas — are we winning?

Bill Handke: President of the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group.

Bill will talk about the environmental threat posed by the Indian Myna and what is being done about it.

Thursday 21 August

Annual General Meeting

to be followed by presentation.

Volcanoes, glaciers and peaks in the Patagonian Andes.

Annette and Mike Smith: NPA ACT members.

The Patagonian Andes in the south of Chile and Argentina include towering peaks, volcanoes, glaciers and glacial lakes. In January 2008, Annette and Mike joined a group on some of the classic treks of Patagonia. The presentation will show highlights of walking in various national parks there, starting with a volcano in the northern Patagonian Villarrica National Park, and culminating in Torres del Paine National Park in the south.

National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

- Promotion of national parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery, natural features and cultural heritage in the Australian Capital Territory and elsewhere, and the reservation of specific areas.
- Interest in the provision of appropriate outdoor recreation areas.
- Stimulation of interest in, and appreciation and enjoyment of, such natural phenomena and cultural heritage by organised field outings, meetings or any other means.
- Cooperation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.
- Promotion of, and education for, conservation, and the planning of landuse to achieve conservation.

Office-bearers

<i>President</i>	Christine Goonrey	6231 8395 (h)	cgoonrey@grapevine.com.au
<i>Vice-President</i>	Chris Emery	6249 7604 (h)	chris.emery@optusnet.com.au
<i>Secretary</i>	Sonja Lenz	6251 1291 (h)	sllenz@grapevine.com.au
<i>Treasurer</i>	Rod Griffiths	6288 6988 (h)	Rod.Griffiths@defence.gov.au

Committee members

Mike Bremers	6292 3408 (h)	mcbremers@optusnet.com.au
Steven Forst	6251 6817 (h) 6219 5236 (w)	steven.forst@acma.gov.au
Sabine Friedrich	6249 7604 (h)	sabine.canberra@gmail.com
Clive Hurlstone	6288 7592 (h) 0407 783 422 (mob)	cjhurls@bigpond.net.au
Judy Kelly	6253 1859 (h)	judy.kelly@tpg.com.au
Kevin McCue (Immediate Past President)	6251 1291 (h)	kmccue@grapevine.com.au
Annette Smith	6286 2984 (h)	annette.smith@netspeed.com.au

Conveners

<i>Outings Sub-committee</i>	Mike Smith	6286 2984 (h)	msmith@netspeed.com.au
<i>Publications Sub-committee</i>	Sabine Friedrich	6249 7604 (h)	sabine.canberra@gmail.com
<i>Bulletin Working Group</i>	Max Lawrence	6288 1370 (h)	mlawrence@netspeed.com.au

The NPA ACT office is in the Conservation Council building, Childers Street, City. It is staffed by volunteers but not on a regular basis. Callers may leave phone or email messages at any time and they will be attended to. The post office mail box is cleared daily.

Phone:	(02) 6229 3201	0412 071 382
Website:	www.npaact.org.au	
Email:	admin@npaact.org.au	
Address:	GPO Box 544, Canberra ACT 2601	

Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

Household membership	\$44	Single members	\$38.50
Corporate membership	\$33	<i>Bulletin</i> only	\$33
Concession	\$11		

Advertising

The *Bulletin* accepts advertisements and inserts. Contact the Editor for information and rates.

NPA Bulletin

Contributions of articles, letters, drawings and photographs are always welcome. Items accepted for publication may also be published on the NPA website. Send all items to The *Bulletin* Team, admin@npaact.org.au, or the postal address above.

Deadline for September 2008 issue: 31 July 2008

This *Bulletin* was produced by the NPA *Bulletin* Working Group.

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ISSN 0727-8837

New Publications of the NPA ACT

Field Guide to the Orchids of the Australian Capital Territory

Text and original drawings by David L. Jones

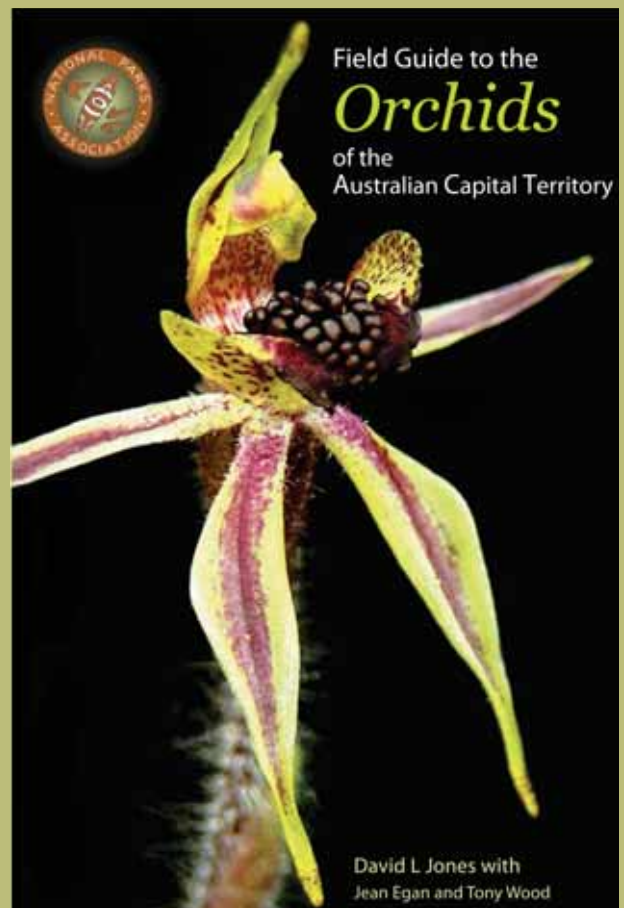
Digital enhancement of drawings by Jean Egan

Principal photographer Tony Wood

This high quality, comprehensive guide to native orchid species is exceptional value for both the novice and experienced orchid enthusiast. Principal author David Jones is a respected authority on Australian orchids. He has made a special study of the orchids of the local region, describing many new species. This book contains excellent colour photographs, large botanical illustrations and full descriptions of the 121 species found in the ACT. Specific local distribution notes will aid the ACT orchid friend.

Additional features include a distribution map, glossary and notes on understanding orchids, their habitats and reproduction. Cross-referencing of previous and current nomenclature is particularly useful.

Published by the National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.
288 pages, 21x12 cm, perfect binding. ISBN 0646447475
Recommended retail price \$38.50 + postage where applicable.



Geology of the Australian Capital Territory

This map will be printed in early July, and is an outcome of the NPA's 2006 symposium.

It is a 1:100 000 scale map of the geology of the ACT area, compiled by NPA ACT member Robert Abell. The map is a Geological Society of Australia publication. You can place an order by emailing Kevin McCue (kmccue@grapevine.com.au); please specify whether you want a rolled or a folded copy.

The RRP is \$9.90 for the map alone, or \$15.40 for the map together with a CD which contains a Geographic Information System version of the geology and many other layers of information, plus software to view the data.

This map will be a useful resource for school projects, for students of all ages and for anyone who is curious about the foundations of Canberra and Namadgi National Park.

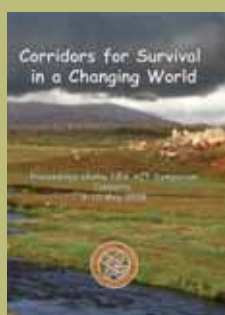
Small inset maps show past earthquake epicentres and their regional geological setting, the relief and a Landsat image.



These publications are also still in print

- 2008 Symposium Proceedings: **Corridors for Survival in a Changing World — NEW**
- **Field guide to the Native Trees of the ACT**
- **Field guide to the Birds of the ACT**

To purchase your copies contact us or come to a general meeting



For more information please visit our website <http://www.npaact.org.au>