



NPA *Bulletin*

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National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc



**Wasps invade
Namadgi**



**New association life
member**



**African alpine
adventure**

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

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From the President



Like so many of our members this winter, I have not been sitting at home wishing for spring. I have visited Africa twice, once to admire the game parks and rural villages and then a second time to be astonished by the giant lobelias and other native flora in alpine Ethiopia and Kenya. I have snorkelled up the Cotter River (yes,

snorkelled) and I have tramped all over Australasia investigating the bogs and fens in the high mountains. I came back to my own street in July to check up on an ambitious plan to rid Canberra of Indian mynas, but in August I'm off again to the wilds of Patagonia to climb a volcano and visit their national parks.

As you will have guessed, my adventures have been in the company of Esther Gallant, Roger Farrow, Geoff Hope, Brendan Ebner and Bill Handke, all of them guest speakers at our general meetings over the past few months. Our members go to some amazing places but more than that, they travel intelligently, bringing back fascinating insights and great photos. And the scientists, researchers and field officers who talk to us are equally curious and insightful. Who would ever

have thought of putting on snorkelling gear to count fingerling hatchlings in our shallow creeks and rivers? Brendan Ebner did, and because of the work he and the Parks, Conservation and Land (PCL) research team carried out, we can be more confident that the Macquarie Perch will survive the raising of the Cotter Dam wall.

What has made me reflect on these things is that many members I've met over the past year apologise for not getting to our general meetings or getting more involved in NPA activities. "I'm just a member," they say, "I don't really have time to come to meetings or do things." But by being "just a member", paying membership fees and reading the *Bulletin*, they are making a valuable contribution. Our strong membership base keeps us financially sound, it gives us leverage when we want to put pressure on the government to take care of our national park and it helps build wider community recognition of the importance of caring for our parks and reserves.

However, maybe there are some things our members can do which doesn't require much extra time. At the end of our Symposium in May I gave the audience a challenge: next time you are sitting down with family or friends at dinner, bring up a discussion on how we can make a contribution to reducing energy consumption and protecting our biodiversity. The very next day I tried it out and found it surprisingly hard to do. I didn't want to sound like a know-it-all or critical of my friends' lifestyle so I began very tentatively, but they took up the challenge with enthusiasm. They thought maybe they could join a local Landcare group, plant more trees on their

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Annual General Meeting 2008

President Christine Goonrey welcomed members to the AGM on Thursday 21 August 2008, and started off her report with the bad news that there is still no final Namadgi Plan of Management in place. The national park is starved of funds for routine pest control, as well as much needed capital works for walks, campsites and other park infrastructure. She also expressed NPA's concern about the funding priorities in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

But the good news is that NPA ACT has been an active, enthusiastic organisation over the past 12 months. The most exciting achievement was the 2008 Symposium *Corridors for Survival in a Changing World*. This event also included a very successful photographic exhibition and the launch of the *Field Guide to the Orchids of the Australian Capital Territory*.

Christine mentioned the Publications Sub-committee and the *Bulletin* working group who put a lot of effort into re-vamping the *Bulletin* and introducing a colour cover, as well as our website which is always kept up-to-date with information and members' photos, and the full outings program organised by an active Outings Sub-committee.

To Christine the highlight of this year's outdoor activities was the

celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Gudgeby Bush Regeneration Group. Christine made special mention of the office volunteers as the quiet achievers, but her thanks went out to all members who had worked quietly and diligently for the association in the last year. The full President's report is published elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

Jean Currie passed on to the AGM greetings from previous members Val and Don Honey (Val used to contribute a regular column to the *Bulletin* under the name of *Melliodora*).

In his report for the year ended 30 June 2008, read out by the President, the absent Treasurer Rod Griffiths mentioned that NPA's profit was up on the previous year's despite the bigger than usual commitments. A complete copy of the audited financial report was available for perusal at the meeting.

Both reports were accepted by the meeting and Mr Malcolm Prentice, FCPA, reappointed as auditor for the coming year. The meeting extended their gratitude to both the President and the Treasurer for their excellent work.

Kevin McCue reported that Len Haskew had been nominated by NPA members for Honorary Life Membership this year. The meeting accepted the Committee's recommendation to grant

this honour to Len by acclamation. The citation is published elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

Max Lawrence then took over the chair to conduct the association's annual election of office bearers and committee members. Nominees for ten positions were duly elected (see inside back page of the *NPA Bulletin*), but Max noted that there are still vacant positions on the committee (including Vice-President) and that additional members can be co-opted during the year.

Christine extended a special thanks for his work and dedication over many years to Steven Forst who decided to resign from the committee and who will be sorely missed. The meeting thanked Max for acting as the returning officer by acclamation.

To top the meeting off, long-standing members Annette and Mike Smith gave an inspiring illustrated presentation on highlights of their recent treks in the Patagonian Andes in the south of Chile and Argentina, titled *Volcanoes, glaciers and peaks in the Patagonian Andes*.

After ensuing questions had been answered by the presenters, the President invited all to enjoy the wonderful supper provided by members, and Adrienne's heart-warming gluhwein.

Sonja Lenz

The walk of the fences



*Under
Over
Around
Through ...*

Steve Hill led his group around Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve on 3 August via just about every type of fence "crossing" you could think of. He even opened one gate and simply walked through!



From the President *(continued)*

property and teach their children to recycle more effectively.

Flushed with success I am now going to set a similar challenge for our members: maybe just once a year come along to a general meeting and bring a friend; encourage a neighbour to join NPA ACT; log onto our website and check out our photos and activities; and let someone on the committee know if

something is worrying you. It was a phone call from a member which prompted us to push for the repair of the walking tracks in Tidbinbilla and hopefully this spring at least one may be back in commission.

We often think we should be doing more to support the causes we believe in, but the truth is we are usually doing as much as we can. NPA ACT is a

financially sound and effective organisation because of the support of all its members. But do try to get along to a general meeting or a walk or a workparty if you can. You too could end up in Patagonia.

Christine Goonrey

Annual Report 2007–08

This year's annual report gets off to a familiar start. For the past three years I have been reporting to members that the Management Plan for Namadgi National Park is due to be released soon. So let me begin with the bad news: we still don't have a Namadgi Management Plan.

The process began in September 2005, just after I was first elected President. It looked like we were finally getting somewhere in March 2008 when the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment announced a public inquiry and asked for submissions; but they refused to release the latest draft of the Plan of Management and we knew it had changed substantially.

It was very confusing, commenting on a draft plan which we weren't allowed to see, but we did our best. Our major concerns continue to be the additional access for horse riding in Grassy Creek and Burnt Hill and the removal of Schedule 3 which restricted large-scale events in the park.

A 2007 draft was finally released after we had made our appearance before the committee and we expected to see the final plan approved in a relatively short time. Yet here we are, six months later, and still no sign of the final management plan. We hope this government has the sense to release it before going to the elections in October, or else who knows what will happen?

Starved of funds

So, the more time rolls on, the more things remain the same. It is not just the lack of a formal management plan; Namadgi is starved of funds for routine pest control, let alone much needed capital works for walks, campsites and other park infrastructure.

But over in Tidbinbilla the \$1 million playground and the \$7 million wetlands are soon to be joined by a \$2 million "Tree Top Walk" while the Red Hill, Cascades and Lyrebird walking trails remain closed to the bushwalking public. Old walking trails which bushwalkers have enjoyed in the past will probably never be restored, and staffing at Tidbinbilla has been allowed to fall to one-third of previous levels. At the same time the government boasts of a \$97 million budget surplus.

NPA ACT does not play party politics but perhaps individual members might like to ask their local candidates in the October elections what their position is on increasing resources for proper

management of our national park.

Against this background NPA ACT has been an active, enthusiastic organisation over the past 12 months. We've achieved some amazing things, the most exciting being the 2008 Symposium, *Corridors for Survival in a Changing World*. The program was rich with speakers from our local research institutions and universities, the discussions were very informative and the warnings were clear: we need to act now to protect our native flora and fauna from the impact of climate change.

The weekend was also packed with other events including a very successful photographic exhibition with the beautiful photos of Namadgi reminding us why we are working so hard to help protect our park and reserves.

The Publications Committee, especially Max Lawrence, Sonja Lenz and Sabine Friedrich, put in a lot of work to re-vamp the *Bulletin* and introduce a colour cover which allows us to display members' photographs in all their glory. The committee ran the photographic competition to collect more work from members and exhibited the wonderful photos in Macarthur House, Namadgi Visitor Centre and the Botanic Gardens. The publication of David L Jones's *A Field Guide to Native Orchids of the ACT* was a big task, but it is already selling well, as are the new "Tree Book" and "Bird Book". They are now working on a new edition of the "Frog and Reptile Book".

Chris Emery, Sabine Friedrich, Martin Chalk and others continue to develop our website and keep it packed with up-to-date information and photos. We published Col McAlister's monograph on Glenburn as well as starting work on a book about Namadgi and a calendar for 2009.

The Outings Committee, led by Mike Smith, pulled together a full year of varied and interesting walks which were well attended. Martin Chalk ran six NPA work parties in Namadgi ranging from some difficult sites such as Kangaroo Creek to a very pleasant amble along Grassy Creek down at Mt Clear. The highlight of this year's outdoor activities for me was the celebration of Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group's 10th anniversary. It was a pleasure to walk among the growing eucalypts and see the results of all that hard work, though the swarm of European wasps proved unwelcome guests at the party.

Submissions and proposals

Indoors, we made submissions on Jervis Bay National Park and Woollamia Nature Reserve management plans, on the Brindabella National Park and Bimberi Nature Reserve's Fire Management Strategies and on the Horse Management Plan for Kosciuszko National Park.

We commented on the proposal to import Savannah cats to Australia and on the NSW Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks. We led an inspection of the Bimberi Wilderness Area with other community groups and senior management of Parks, Conservation and Lands, which aimed to emphasise the importance of this area and the need for adequate funding for feral plant and animal control.

Only last month we co-sponsored the European Wasp Workshop at Namadgi Visitor Centre, which drew attention to the alarming spread of these dangerous pests in our national park (see separate report).

As at going to press we are still waiting to see a re-development proposal for Stockyard Spur Fire Trail. Although the fire trail is already in existence, we have serious concerns about the proposed size of the re-development and we will be making a submission on this when the planning approval process finally gets under way.

We also took part in a review of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, which now seems to have ground to a halt. However, the more alarming elements of the previous plan (for example prescribed burning being triggered by 35mm of forest litter) no longer seem to be part of the planning process. A new element in the planning process is the Sub-Regional Plans, which are developed and run by Parks Conservation and Lands. These are vigorously monitored by their research unit so we hope this level of planning will specify safe, reasonable fire mitigation strategies for our parks and reserves.

Quiet achievers

Through all this activity the office volunteers are the quiet achievers. With very little fanfare, Diana Heins, Julie Lindner and a new arrival, Lorraine Ball, have kept on top of the paperwork and

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NPA gets new Life Member

Following the provisions of the NPA Constitution and a set of procedures laid out in the NPA website, the 2008 AGM unanimously endorsed the committee's recommendation that Len Haskew be awarded Life Membership of the NPA.

Len has made significant contributions to NPA ACT over many years. He served on the committee for 10 years, five of them as Secretary (on two separate occasions). He carried out the duties with quiet efficiency and was always willing to act in the position if the Secretary was unavailable. In addition he was convenor of the Marketing, Publicity and Education Subcommittee.

Len first contributed to the *Bulletin* in December 1990, and his most recent article appears in this issue. In the intervening years he contributed articles, book reviews, reports and photographs in many issues. He is an accomplished photographer and graced the pages of many *Bulletins* with his work. In the mid 1990s Len offered to compile

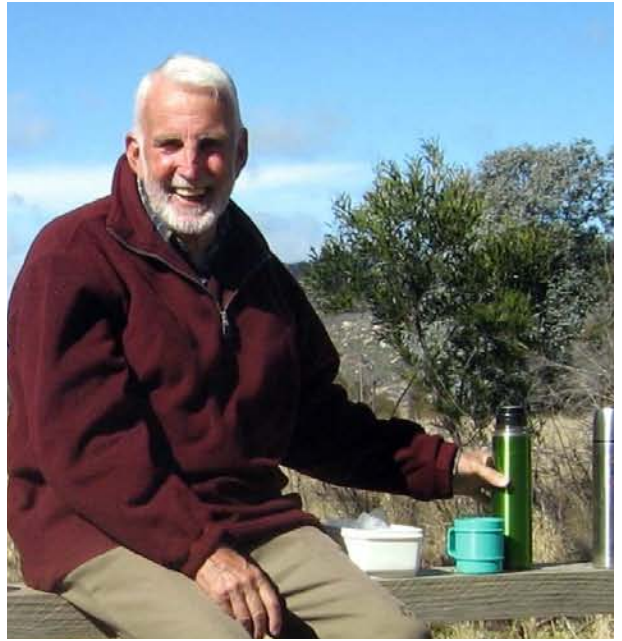
PARKWATCH and continued to do this in every issue until early 2008.

Throughout the 1990s he was an active participant in walks and other outings. He led walks, car camps and work parties, including some extended walks such as that to the West Macdonnells. His companionable presence added greatly to the value of any outing in which he participated.

Over the years Len has given a great deal of his cheerful and positive personality to the association and made a great contribution to the spirit of fellowship within NPA ACT.

**Kevin McCue, Convenor,
Life Membership Working Group**

Warm congratulations to Len ! (Ed.)



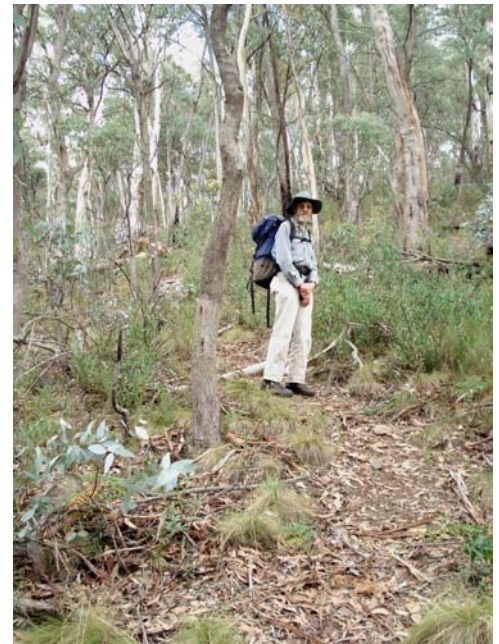
Stockyard Spur



Left. David Kelly on the Stockyard Spur fire trail, with Mt Gingera beyond.

Right. David Kelly on the Stockyard Spur footpad above Corin Dam.

Photos Judy Kelly



Note. There are plans to upgrade and partially reroute the existing Stockyard Spur fire trail, and to modify the existing footpad from the end of the fire trail down to Corin Dam. NPA will be putting in a submission to the planning process.

Annual Report 2007–08 *(continued)*

re-organised the mountain of documents and past papers which we have collected since our last move. Annette Smith, Sonja Lenz and Clive Hurlstone have kept track of book orders, memberships and donations and all the other things which make us financially sound and active.

The Executive Committee has taken on a workload this past year which would demand respect even from our

workaholic Prime Minister. A special thank you to Steven Forst who is retiring from the committee for a third time. We will miss him but he does deserve a rest after so many years of hard work. Our meetings have always been fun, productive and lubricated by delicious food, especially the plum cakes from Sonja and Sabine. Committee members have even been clever enough to stagger their overseas trips so that we've always

managed a quorum. I can't thank them enough for their unflinching enthusiasm and willingness to do all that is required to keep up the high standard we have come to expect from NPA events, publications and activities. Nothing is too difficult in such good company.

Christine Goonrey

Attack of the wasps

European wasps are prevalent in Kosciuszko and Namadgi National Parks, even in the alpine areas. They were first noted in Namadgi some years ago, but the recent mild dry winters have led to a population explosion. Recreation areas have been closed because of the threat they pose to the public and there is a real danger they will be a long term threat to the biodiversity of our region. The implications are sobering: European wasps prey on insects that pollinate many of our native plants and may also deprive native insectivorous birds and skinks of their food. While there are two related but distinct species of European wasp now in Australia, both pose similar serious threats to our natural ecosystems.

At the recent Wasp Workshop jointly sponsored by NPA and the ACT parks service, the experts agreed that these wasps have the capacity to expand exponentially to the extent that they can wipe out all other insect life in large areas of native bush and make them unsafe for human recreation and use.

This report by Michael Goonrey outlines the main points emerging from this very important workshop.

European wasp workshop

Responding to members' concerns about the increase in European wasps in Namadgi, NPA ACT co-sponsored a Workshop on European Wasps with Parks Conservation and Lands (PCL) staff at the Namadgi Visitor Centre on 29 July 2008. Australasian experts gathered to discuss the problem. Local experts such as Dr Philip Spradbery, a social wasp expert and former CSIRO entomologist, and park managers from the region, joined New Zealand researcher Dr Greg Sherley to discuss different approaches to managing these invasive pests.

European wasps were first noticed in Namadgi National Park some 10 years ago and then recognised as a more serious problem some 3–4 years ago when a ranger found many nests at the one spot in the Park. More recently, Woods Reserve, a popular camping area near Corin Forest was closed because of the high numbers of wasps in the area.

ACT experience

First up was Ms Jenny Conolly, who is the Invertebrate Pest and Weeds Officer

in PCL, followed by Dr Spradbery, who both spoke about the local experience. Dr Spradbery explained that the wasps first came to New Zealand in 1945 in a shipment of aircraft spare parts from Britain. From there they spread to Hobart where two nests were found in 1959, and from there they spread rapidly throughout Tasmania.

In 1977/78 they were spread to mainland Australia by a single ship offloading timber from New Zealand in all major city ports. The first European wasp nest in the ACT was discovered in 1984 at Pialligo near the airport. Today the wasps are found up south eastern Australia as far north as Maryborough and in South and Western Australia.

The wasps are now very widespread in ACT urban and rural areas. In 2003 there were reports of 144 nests on the ACT European Wasp and Insect Identification Hotline (most reports come from the urban areas of the ACT). This number had grown to 510 nests for 2007/08. Nest numbers have gone up 60 per cent in the ACT in the last two years.



As PCL no longer go to private homes in Canberra to treat nests, this may cause some under-reporting in the data. There are not enough funds in the pest and weeds budget to do effective wasp nest baiting, the best way to get rid of the pests.

New Zealand experience

Dr Sherley, an invertebrate ecologist with the New Zealand Department of Conservation, then explained that they have spent a lot of time and money dealing with European wasps as they are an extremely serious problem in that country. A lot of relevant information is available free from the department's website at www.doc.govt.nz

In New Zealand the worst problem used to be with *Vespa germanica* but now they are being displaced by *Vespa vulgaris*, which are harder to deal with. Their experience has been that getting rid of *V. germanica* opens up the likelihood

of a new invasion of *V. vulgaris*. It is very important to be clear about which type you are dealing with.

The growth in wasps has been exponential with a huge growth in both spread and density. Because of this unpredictability aspect, Dr Sherley advocated the precautionary principle — assume the worst and get in early with a big punch. Other lessons to be learnt from the New Zealand experience include: early intervention is critical because once the wasps are established the problem is practically intractable; biological control seems unlikely; and there can be a whole-of-community impact on both vertebrates and invertebrates because of the cascade effect.

Tasmanian experience

Dr Mick Statham, Senior Research Fellow with the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research, and Dr Catherine Young, an entomologist in the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water, spoke about the Tasmanian experience.

V. germanica wasps were first found in Tasmania in 1959 and *V. vulgaris* wasps came in 1994. The latter were initially restricted to southern Tasmania but are now appearing more widely.

They are devoting a lot of time and energy to a baiting program using *Fipronil*, distributing baits to landholders and agriculturalists. One source of funding for their program has been the Tasmanian wine industry because the wasps present a serious threat to wine crops. They have been working to get commercial bait produced by one of the big chemical companies but to date no-one seems interested.

NSW experience

Mr Luke McLachlan, Pest Management Officer in the Snowy Mountains Region of NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), reported that an expansion in numbers was noticed in 2003 and then a huge explosion in 2007. The mild weather conditions in 2006 followed by those in 2007 were thought to be a contributing factor to this.

After an eight-month delay NPWS has obtained a three-year permit for *Fipronil* baiting. Some conditions imposed on the permit are still being negotiated such as only NPWS staff and

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Attack of the wasps *(continued)*

contractors being able to use *Fipronil* and they must do three days monitoring before using the bait. They will be using the Tasmanian technique and will target visitor areas.

How to spot a European wasp

The European wasp is different to the native paper, mud dauber and potter wasps in both appearance and behaviour. The queens are about 20mm long, nearly twice the size of worker wasps which are about the same size as a honey bee. They have bright black and lemon coloured stripes with black spots on their abdomen.

In the wild, the nest is commonly underground and the entrance may be well hidden. The only giveaway may be wasps entering and leaving a small inconspicuous hole in the ground. However, the nest itself may be very large. Nests as big as a small car have been found in Tasmania and in New Zealand: the record so far is a nest of about a million wasps.

It is rare for the wasps to have exposed nests or to have nests in tree hollows but in Canberra cavity walls and roof spaces are popular for nests. Three years ago European wasp nests comprised 23 per cent of nests reported in ACT buildings. Now the proportion is 53 per cent.

In winter months the queen hibernates, having mated the previous summer or autumn. She is easily moved around with whatever container she affixes herself to. In spring she begins searching for suitable nesting sites such as holes in the ground, and can travel up to 1km.

The single queen starts by producing the first crop of 20–30 worker wasps. The queen lays up to a maximum of 300 eggs per day from October to May–June and only lives for 12 months. She is most vulnerable in the initial nesting stages when she is actively collecting food for the first brood of larvae.

Why the rapid increase?

In Australia there are no natural enemies for European wasps and they are not constrained by the cold European winters or lack of food (road kill is a valuable source of protein for the wasps in Australia).

In Europe a nest may have up to 8 000 cells and produce up to 2 000 new queens each year. In Australia there can



Brood layers removed from a European wasp nest, showing the cells in which the larvae are raised.

be up to 20 000 cells in a nest and up to 16 000 new queens. This means that total eradication is never on the cards. In Evatt ACT the density of nests was found to be 100 nests per square kilometre compared to no more than 50 nests in the UK.

Why is the problem serious?

European wasps can have a significant impact in many areas:

- Agriculture. There can be significant losses in production. Beekeepers advise that up to 10 per cent of hives in New Zealand have been affected and in California there are reports of up to 50 per cent of grape harvests being affected. So far the fruit harvests in Australia have not been affected significantly but farm orchards have been devastated when the wasps nest nearby.
- They eat anything! Adult wasps require a high energy diet, principally consisting of carbohydrates such as nectar, honeydew and ripe fruit juice for the workers. They feed on protein such as insects and animal road kill for the larvae. One New Zealand study showed that over 12 months one nest collected 100 kilograms of insect prey (which is equal to 3.5 million blowflies). Their level of predation has the potential to seriously reduce biodiversity. There are reports from New Zealand of wasps preying on nestling birds. In that country they also compete for forest honeydew — they can strip so much from the beech forest that they are having an impact on bird life. They do not feed on any specific insect, although they have been found to consume blowflies, butterflies (including larvae) and spiders, generally in that order. In some areas there are no surviving native insects, which has serious implications for pollination of native plants. There are

reports of wedge tail eagles being kept away from kangaroo carcasses because of wasp numbers.

- They are a threat to humans. There were 1600 calls on the ACT hotline last year and 60 per cent of those were about European wasps. There have been distinct impacts, such as Woods Reserve and schools being closed. Severe swelling can result from a wasp sting and they are often swallowed resulting in serious injury in the mouth and throat. There are reports of a wasp sting inducing cardiac arrest but so far there are no human deaths from wasp stings (although some deaths may have been misdiagnosed as heart attacks). Scientists consider it is inevitable that someone will die from stings eventually. A Red Hill resident was stung 28 times when he disturbed a nest in his backyard. The wasps will not hesitate to attack if their nests are disturbed.

- Tourist areas have been seriously affected in some parts of New Zealand, with seasonal closures due to high wasp danger in summer. In Australia the impact could be severe, for example, on places like fishing spots where wasps are too dense.
- Human health and occupational health and safety are also serious issues. There are very real dangers for people if stung, particularly when in remote areas. A first aid kit could include a portable defibrillator and *EpiPen* adrenaline injector (NB. training is needed to administer these).

How to control wasps

There are basically two methods of control: treating the nests or baiting of the wasps. In the ACT, PCL rangers and staff who hold current chemicals qualifications are authorised to treat European wasp nests. PCL use a registered pesticide called *Coopex* insecticidal dusting powder whose active constituent is 10g/kg *Permethrin*. The powder is puffed down the entrance hole of the nest with a check made in 24 hours, and the nest re-treated if necessary. Staff treating a nest must wear protective clothing. PCL have been doing baiting trials under a permit from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) using a low concentration of *Fipronil*.

In New Zealand an attempt was made at biological control with a parasitoid but

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Attack of the wasps *(continued from page 7)*

it was a failure. It seems biological control will not be available in the near future. Basically they use Fipronil and a long-life bait combination which works. They have controlled the wasps in mainland islands of up to 10 000ha. Outside those areas there is little or no control.

They have been able to knock down the density of the wasps so that honey dew has become available on beech trees and spiders etc. are coming back. Any action taken to control wasps must be able to be monitored and the results measurable so that the benefits can be demonstrated. You must keep monitoring so that you can see what effort produces what effect. So any program must be ongoing and not of short duration.

Based on New Zealand work, a simple trial was carried out in Tasmania in 1999. The technique uses meat bait which is carried back to the nest by worker wasps to feed larvae, thereby introducing poison directly into the nest. Fish bait and the insecticide *Sulfuramid* were used but the poison was not registered in Australia and quolls ate the bait. After discovering that it was used in New Zealand, South Australia and Victoria, further trial work was carried out using the insecticide *Fipronil* in fresh wallaby meat bait as this was found to be the most effective.

The Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water currently has two experimental permits from the APVMA to supply baits. The first allows anyone in Tasmania to use a powder containing *Permethrin* in the feeder with fresh liver as an attractant. The second allows them to supply frozen *Fipronil* baits for use where the nests cannot be located. They can supply baits to licensed pest controllers, governments and councils but not to private home owners.

The advantages of baiting include that the bait seems to be working well and is therefore effective. On the other hand, under their existing permit to supply the baits, the Department is not allowed to charge for the baits, people have to collect them from a central location because the baits are frozen, and the process ties up staff resources.

The future

For the future there is a new product called *Amaxis* with *Fipronil* bait on freeze-dried

meat in its own cardboard bait station. This allows the product to travel better and last longer. It is produced by Bayer Patagonia and the Tasmanian Department has so far been unsuccessful in persuading Bayer to make the product available in Australia. It would be very good if such a product became generally accessible to private home owners.

There are concerns about the time taken to get a permit and whether there could be a national permit system.

An action plan is being developed by PCL to address the problems raised. These include matters like putting a project proposal to the Australian Alps National Parks Liaison Committee for monitoring and research; applying for a grant under the Federal Caring for Country Program; considering an approach to APVMA about the issue of a national permit for *Fipronil*; lobbying chemical companies to make *Amaxis* or another commercial bait available in Australia.

NPA recognises danger

NPA ACT recognises the clear danger that European wasps pose. Because there is the opportunity to address the problem while there is still a chance, NPA has called on the ACT government to allocate \$200 000 immediately to hit wasps hard and fast in the summer. It is a small amount of money compared to the damage European wasps can cause to both people and the bush.

As part of this campaign NPA has written to the Chief Minister and there has been publicity about the issue in the TV, radio and print media. At its September meeting the National Parks Australia Council will also be asked to take up the cause as well and to push for commercial baits to be made available on the open market.



European wasps helping themselves from a cheese plate at the GBRG birthday, Gudgenby, 12 July 2008.



A PCL warning notice attached to a picnic table at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

We also recognise that community groups can make a big contribution. The hardest part of getting rid of wasps is finding their nests. Bird watchers, orchid lovers, bushwalkers, field naturalists and landcare groups have all found nests. In urban areas people can call the European Wasp Hotline on 6162 1914 run by Dr Spradbery, XCS Consulting. They will then notify Jenny Conolly, Invertebrate Pest and Weeds Officer, PCL, of all nests that require treatment and nests are treated within 24 hours of being reported. TAMS website (www.tams.act.gov.au) has lots of information about European wasps as well.

However, there is no similar facility for reports relating to the national park. NPA believes there should be some capacity to take out wasp nests in the national park based on community reports. At the same time we need a research program so we can understand how they are surviving and breeding in these remote areas so we can set up a long-term control program.

Existing resources cannot deliver the swift and widespread action which is required. There is a compelling need for at least one additional pest control officer to be appointed as soon as possible to work in protected areas; baiting programs need to be increased in urban and rural areas; and a co-ordinated research and training program is needed so that wasp monitoring and tracking is undertaken in an effective and

(continued next page)

Frank Clements 1926–2008

Frank Clements was born on the goldfields of Western Australia and spent much of his childhood around Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. As a child he began the study of music and along with other instruments learnt to play the clarinet. He developed a love of music which stayed with him all his life.

After leaving school Frank became a trainee electronics engineer with the then Postmaster General's Department. The war saw his technical education cut short and as a very young man he spent the war years maintaining essential communications around various regions of Western Australia.

Then he took advantage of his electronic background and became a Technical Officer with the Bureau of Mineral Resources. Frank was engaged on electro-magnetic surveys on land, in the air and on the oceans around WA. He spent much of his time in very remote and challenging locations and it was then that I imagine he developed his deep and abiding passion for nature and the natural environment.

While still working with the bureau, Frank came to Canberra and began his long association with NPA. The friends he made in here (and they were a legion) became, in a sense, Frank's family in Canberra.

In his younger days he was a great backpacker and he enjoyed nothing more than camping out. I have many wonderful memories of Frank spinning yarns around the campfire and he had so many stories to tell that it was very rare to hear the same story more than once. Frank led many walks, a favourite being over the Gudgenby Saddle to Mt Kelly. Frank had a preferred route along what I felt was a mythical contour — but he could always "find" it and lead us successfully to our destination.

Frank was an "ultralight" walker long before it became fashionable. As a result he had a very unusual but characteristic

method of donning his pack. I could never quite work out just what he did but it appeared to me that he somehow threw it up on to his back!

Frank was a wonderful leader and always took into account the abilities of those in his party. If there were any children on the walk he enthusiastically made them very welcome. He led walks in Namdagi, Kosciuszko and the Budawang.

An NPA Work Party wasn't a work party if Frank wasn't there. He assisted with track maintenance and construction in the Budawangs, he helped construct the Yerrabi Track and he was a whiz at cutting and dabbing briars.

Frank turned up at every Work Party for the restoration of Orroral Homestead and his skill with the tools was always greatly appreciated. His size and agility saw him working in some very awkward places and I recall a great photograph of Reg Alder's showing Frank just about boxed in while doing some woodwork under the roof of Orroral.

He was a foundation member of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group and a hard working and enthusiastic member of its Work Parties. In the days of the Namadgi Sub-Committee Frank was always willing to assist in any way he could.

In years gone by when it was a tradition to sing Christmas carols at NPA's Christmas party, Frank accompanied the singers on his clarinet. He was also an enthusiastic thespian and I have a great memory of him modelling some uniforms that Di Thompson had brought along to a presentation she gave NPA on the wilds of Central Asia. Frank stole the show!

For the last 19 years of his life Frank



Frank Clements at Horse Gully Hut, 1996

was an Explainer at Questacon. He was especially fond of helping young visitors, and I know that my grandchildren thought that he was just the best Explainer. They always wanted to visit Questacon on the days when Frank was on duty.

Frank was fond of experimenting, constructing and improving. Many years ago he "converted" his Mazda to electronic ignition. As far as I know it never let him down; but it was something of a challenge to any mechanic working on something that Frank couldn't do for himself.

Frank's commitment to NPA was appreciated by the Committee and members alike, and he was overjoyed when Steven Forst led an 80th Birthday Celebration Walk to Brandy Flat Hut. Frank was a friend to all Members with whom he came into contact and I am sure that we all remember him with much pleasure and affection. We will miss him.

Len Haskew

Attack of the wasps *(continued)*

consistent way. This work needs to be started this summer if we are to avoid the painful lessons of New Zealand.

Seldom do we as a community get such a clear opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others and head off a major ecological disaster of this magnitude. We need an effective European wasp control program in place before this summer.

Michael Goonrey

Postscript

The Chief Minister's response to NPA's request for urgent funding for a program of wasp control in Namadgi this summer was to point out that \$65 000 had been allocated to ongoing programs (including urban) in the current budget, and that additional funding for a "scoping study" would be sought through the Australian Alps Co-operative

Management Program. In the meantime, public safety will be protected by action to control wasp nests around public recreation areas (Woods Reserve has already been reopened).

There was no explicit expression of concern at all in the Chief Minister's response about the prospective impact of wasps on Namadgi biodiversity.

Ed

Vale Frank Clements

It was with great sadness we heard the news that our long-time member, Frank Clements, had recently passed away. At the June meeting, members present were told that Frank had had an operation and we all signed a get-well card to him. It was therefore a shock to me and to other members present at the July meeting to be told that Frank had passed away that week.

Frank was a long-time stalwart of NPA and a regular club bushwalker and leader during the 1980s and early '90s. During the 1980s when our children were young we undertook a number of packwalks with a small group of

members, some of whom are no longer with us, through the Budawangs, Namadgi and parks in the near NSW region. Frank participated in some of these walks.

Frank was always a caring and patient leader of walks. Where our children were involved he always expressed a genuine interest in their activities. Indeed, when our youngest daughter, Alice, began taking her music seriously, initially with the piano, Frank gave her a metronome to assist her in her practice.

At that time, Frank was an active and talented musician playing with one of the

well-known bands around Canberra. When Alice decided she wanted to try the clarinet, the musical instrument Frank played, he was especially delighted and was generous with his time providing her with encouragement and advice in playing that instrument.

Speaking on behalf of our family we will always have fond memories of Frank, remembering him as a quiet and generous person who was always there with a word of advice or a helping hand.

Gary Thompson

Walking the Tidbinbilla Range



NPA walkers on the Pimple. Photo Mike Bremers

Some time ago someone commented to John Evans, local bushwalking identity and new NPA member, that a walk along the Tidbinbilla Range from Camels Hump to Mt Domain could not be completed in a day. On 29 March 2008 a joint NPA/Canberra Bushwalking Club party of six not only busted this myth but walked the full length of the Tidbinbilla Range from north of Black Spring Mountain to Fishing Gap with a side trip to The Pimple. The distance was 23.3km with a total climb of 1300m.

In order to allow an early start we decided to begin the walk from the

northern end of the Tidbinbilla Range Road, which is accessible from Pierces Creek Forest. This allowed us to start walking at first light at about 6:30am rather than waiting for the 9:00am opening of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve gates. By 9:00am we were on Camels Hump and the difficult part of the walk was about to begin. Morning tea was on Johns Peak at 10:00am.

We then continued through regrowth and some open patches to Tidbinbilla Peak and on to the cairn at spot height 1555. At this point we decided to do the optional side trip to The Pimple because

we were a bit ahead of our schedule. We admired the views from The Pimple to the north and west for five minutes and then headed for Tidbinbilla Mountain for a 20-minute lunch at 1:00pm.

After another three hours and 3.6km of a full body workout pushing through patches of thick regrowth we arrived at Mt Domain where we had a quick afternoon tea. The descent from Mt Domain was slowed by tiredness and the thicker than expected regrowth (noticeably thicker than last October). However, we did manage to get to Fishing Gap in about 90 minutes and by 7:00pm we were at the Fishing Gap Carpark and the car that we had left there the previous day.

The joy of achieving the difficult challenge was muted by exhaustion with some thoughts and/or mutterings of it being a once-in-a-lifetime walk. The group consisted of at least four NPA and four CBC members — some of us are members of both. The participants were: John Evans, Mike Bremers, Peter Anderson-Smith, Henry Hatch, Dick Morton and Brian Surin.

Further details of the walk can be found at John's website:

<http://members.pcug.org.au/~jevans/>

Mike Bremers

The flying cane toad

Tackling Indian mynas — are we winning?

At the July NPA general meeting our guest speaker was Bill Handke, a Kambah resident who is President of the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (CIMAG). Bill gave us a very entertaining, informative and well-practised presentation on the threat to the natural and urban environments posed by these annoying little avian pests, and the degrees of success that have been achieved in dealing with them.

In short, these little blighters are native to southern Asia and, as their name implies, the Indian subcontinent. They are invasive especially of urban areas, extremely aggressive towards other species, territorial, roost communally, and are opportunistic feeders. They are long-lived, typically sticking around to annoy us for 12 to 15 years each given the chance. They pair off for breeding during the warmer months — October to March.

Indian mynas should not be confused with starlings, blackbirds, or the native noisy miners (note the different spelling). They are in fact members of the (dysfunctional) starling family, but compete very successfully with the common starlings, numbers of which have declined as the numbers of mynas have risen. In fact when mynas encroach into a suburb just about all other species are driven out. When the mynas are removed the noisy miners often move in to the liberated areas.

Unfortunately, Indian mynas were in fact deliberately introduced to Australia. The first importation was in 1862, when some were brought in for the purpose of controlling locusts in Melbourne market gardens. How successful or otherwise

they were is not remembered. But whatever the outcome, Queenslanders were not deterred from introducing them to their state in 1883 to control the cane beetle. True. The sugar industry has a lot to answer for. As does the person or persons who deliberately released mynas in Canberra in 1968.

Today mynas infest urban areas throughout the eastern seaboard. Densities vary — research shows that in Cairns there are around 1200 per square kilometre, and in Canberra we have around 250 per square kilometre, so things could be worse (shudder). They feature on a lot of lists no self-respecting bird would want to be on, including the World Conservation Union's list of 100 most invasive species, where they have the unique distinction (?) of being the only bird on that list.

The invasive and territorial nature of mynas is typified by the nastiness with which they evict other species, by not only taking over nesting hollows, but by aggressively blockading other sites in what they regard as their space, even though they may have no immediate need for those sites themselves. They will also feed on eggs and chicks of other birds, effectively removing all other small birds from "their" territory.

Native birds most affected include the "little fellas" such as wrens, etc, and parrots, including eastern rosellas and, to a lesser extent, crimson rosellas. Impacts could even be felt by kookaburras, gang gangs and other nesting animals such as brushtail possums. Internationally, introduction of mynas has led to the extinction of many indigenous birds in places such as French Polynesia, the Seychelles, Mauritius, and Tahiti. Australia offers them the opportunity of a whole continent to work with.

Beyond the bird kingdom, further prospective victims in our area include endangered insects and lizards such as the golden sun moth, the flightless grasshopper and the grassland earless dragon. Neighbouring woodland ecosystems (Canberra Nature Park) may also be degraded through being denied the services of other birds in activities such as removing lerps, etc.

Even humans suffer from having mynas around. They, that is the mynas, carry lice (as do starlings), and cause health risks



to people prone to dermatitis, asthma, rashes, etc, and they could be a vector for avian flu should that ever lob onto our shores. They can also build scrappy nests in our roof spaces adding to fire risk. Their cheekiness knows no bounds. Bill told of us one case in Chisholm where a myna actually built a nest in someone's mailbox.

So, what can we do about the blighters? CIMAG is a non-profit community action group that has the aim of protecting our native birds and mammals from the threat posed by mynas. It has developed a number of strategies, including public education and a trapping program, which is endorsed by the RSPCA and the ACT Government. This program has been highly successful, having humanely removed some 17 000 mynas from around Canberra in two years.

CIMAG currently has around 500 members. It has 400 traps, and estimates there are another 150 unofficial copies around. Bill exhibited one of the traps at our meeting, and explained how members may participate in the program. For details, check out the website www.indianmynaaction.org.au

Backyard trapping has been shown to have a very positive local impact, but there is also a need to extend measures into the broader landscape. To this end the group is actively promoting public awareness of issues such as the need to reduce quantities of exposed food rubbish, reduce feeding of birds, and reduce access to possible nesting cavities in roof spaces, eaves, etc. Bill also noted that mynas like open spaces such as lawns, and reduction of such areas would also be beneficial.

At the conclusion of questions from a keen and interested audience, Christine warmly thanked Bill for his presentation.

Max Lawrence



Photo above and cartoon from the CIMAG brochure

African alpine adventure

At the May NPA general meeting, Roger Farrow rewarded his fellow members who had braved a cold night, with a fascinating outline of a trip to Ethiopia and Kenya. He and Christine travelled with the UK Alpine Garden Society.

The central Ethiopian Plateau is a densely populated area, well-watered by monsoon rains. The original montane forest has been extensively cleared giving a park-like landscape, with only a few scattered trees left, usually of medicinally useful species. The good rainfall enables rapid cropping, often two crops a year; a highly productive region.

Leaving the central plateau, one drops 2000 feet (610m) into the Great Rift Valley, savannah grassland, heavily (over-)grazed by goats, cattle etc. Ungrazed, this region would be covered with tall tropical grasses.

Roger showed many plant species which we know well, either as garden or greenhouse ornamentals (the glory lily *Gloriosa superba*, impatiens, etc) or even as weeds. Both the glory lily and huge impatiens plants grow as hedgerows or dense roadside shrubbery.

The approach to the Bale Mountains, in the south, was via a productive plateau ("grain-basket" territory) at about 2500m. Only a few remnant plots of original vegetation remain, mostly on slopes too steep to farm or graze. The understorey plants of the podocarp forests again included species familiar to gardeners (*Delphinium spp*, *Impatiens spp*). The original vegetation remnants at the treeline, rising to 3500m, include a tree hypericum; again, the area is heavily grazed. Travelling higher again, even the alpine meadows were heavily grazed, but the group saw gentians (*Swertia sp*), and a small red hot poker (*Kniphofia sp*) in eye-catching swathes. Into the montane levels, low-growing herbs again included familiar species (*Hypericum citrispinum* has medicinal uses).

Roger showed us some of the birds attracted to all these flowering plants; an "lbb" called a "seed-eater" (yes, that is what it is called), and malachite sunbird which pollinates the kniphofias.

Whenever the group stopped, spectators would appear out of nowhere. What these people make of the strangers who take up such odd positions to photograph the local vegetation, we can only wonder. Roger showed us Ethiopian plants for which there are related species in our own region (eg *Lobelia spp*, and *Wahlenbergia spp*).

In the Bale Mountains, the "road"

into the mountains each day was a challenge — mud and/or potholes into which whole vehicles could disappear! The road passed through juniper forest, some of which is conserved in national park. The group were lucky here to see Mountain Nyala, an impressive large antelope.

The Ethiopian travels ended at the very smart, and very new (they were the first guests!), Crater Lake Dreamland, enjoying a touch of luxury to ease away the wet of the mountains and wash away the mud, with the local wine *Cristal*.

And so to Kenya

Mount Kenya, north of Nairobi, was approached from Napa Meru. Reaching almost 5200m, Mount Kenya itself is volcanic and very steep.

In contrast with Ethiopia, the forests around Mount Kenya were in almost pristine condition, although the clearing to 50m either side of the roads does stand out (it is said to be for safety, so drivers can see wandering elephants!). Again, the wildflowers along the roadsides and tracks had a familiar look (impatiens, helichrysums, kniphofias). On this leg of the trip, visiting Mount Kenya National Park, the group walked to their base camp, utilising porters. From there they walked through forests of *Afrocarpus melangurus* (evidence of the Gondwanan connection) and giant bamboos. Above about 3050m the track led through groves of giant lobelia.

Hagania abyssinica (Rosaceae) was another of the plants with medicinal uses. At about 3300m the track emerged from the forest into heathland, then into "vertical bog" with tree heathers (*Erica trimeria* reaching 3m), tussock grasses and tall helichrysums. In the upland, volcanic landscape *Lobelia teleki* (hairy lobelia) and *Dendrosenecia keniensis* (giant groundsel, Asteraceae) reached 2m tall. With much searching, the group found only one of the latter in flower.

At these altitudes, the weather featured; a telling picture of the group well rugged up for "lunch in the bog". This short break was followed by more boggy track, passing red native gladioli (*Gladiolus watsonioides*), then an afternoon foggy glimpse of Mt Kenya itself. Reaching the end of the bog they were faced with a rocky slope and more giant groundsells, then the walk along the Teleki Valley at about 4000m. At the end of the Teleki Valley, a glaciated volcanic area, the track reached Mackinders Hut. This isolated hut is just above 4000m and all materials are brought in "by



Dendrosenecia keniensis, giant groundsel

hand" — ie, on foot. Here it was very cold, as a picture of the happy campers **wearing** their sleeping bags (and everything else) testified.

The group explored around the hut; the seedeaters (remember those "lbb"s) were there, while the rock hyraxes (a small mammal) sunned themselves among the rocks. Roger showed a very small cruciferous plant, *Arabis alpina*, which amazingly grows only in the dung of these small animals.

Patches of bare ground showed the pelleted texture produced by frost heave, and one of the grasses has an ever-increasing circle growth pattern due to the freeze/thaw effects at this altitude. In this extreme habitat, *Helichrysum brownii* grows as a ground cover (at lower altitudes it is a tall plant). The group noted a tightly prostrate *wahlenbergia* (*W. pusilla*). Roger noted that observations of the glacier above the hut show that it is retreating, with the face now at about 4500m.

As the weather was setting in, the group retreated downhill, arriving back at their base at Napa Meru very muddy, but greatly impressed when their willing helpers thoroughly cleaned their boots for them!

After the cold and mud experienced, Roger and Christine rewarded themselves with time at a lodge in Amboseli Reserve on Kenya's southern border, looking out to the snow-tipped (but no longer extensively snow-capped) Mount Kilimanjaro.

Amboseli is known for its elephants which love the swamps fed by Kilimanjaro runoff. From vehicles on adjacent dry land they watched elephants with only their backs showing as they enjoyed the waist-deep marshes and long grass, surrounded by attendant egrets (one riding the elephant, like a tick bird), and with jakanas lily-walking nearby. Other wildlife spotted included hippopotamuses, wildebeest, oryx and zebra. A wonderful finale to an interesting and rewarding trip.

Adrienne Nicholson

A river stroll with NPA

Walk: Molonglo and Murrumbidgee, 15 June 2008.

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Libby Viccars, Julie Deeley, Steve Hill, Margaret Power, Kerry Bryon, Roger Votto, Kerri Bradford, John Kay, Karen Votto, Esther Gallant, Adrienne Nicholson, Len Haskew (13).

Weather: Fine; clear until mid-afternoon; cold wind at times.

As one who always patronised the unfortunates living on the wrong (North) side of Lake Burley Griffin, I was forced by the opening of Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve to modify my opinions. It has happened again. This short walk (7 km) in West Belconnen, taking in stretches of the Molonglo and Murrumbidgee Rivers, is a gem.

When I proposed the walk for the program, I had never been to Stockdill Drive, where a small carpark provides access to walkers. Graeme Barrow's

Walking Canberra's Hills and Rivers (3rd ed., walks 29 and 30) warns about the state of the parking spot and one look made me determined to do something about it. In subsequent visits I cleaned up the broken glass, graffiti and litter. It had to be redone after crackernight.

So it was gratifying to have a good turnout on the day. The chilly wind set us off at pace at 10:10am for Shepherd's Lookout. In spite of its exposed location at the top of a cliff, it was warm there in the sun. The view is classically Australian: the Murrumbidgee, lined by casuarinas and sand drifts, flowing north-west across the border into the hills of NSW.

We headed down hill on a clear path and although we passed Canberra sewage works on our left, there was otherwise a continuing panorama to the mountains. The path is not clearly marked as you near the Molonglo, but we soon found the beam bridge and a sign saying it was closed. Why is not

clear as it could be crossed blindfolded. We had a break on the south bank.

After scaling the cliff, we headed west and south along the Murrumbidgee, much of the area infested with African love grass, to the picnic ground at Uriarra East. Although it was past mid-day, only a few tables were occupied, so we chose one in the sun for a lizard lunch.

The return to Molonglo bridge was shorter: up Uriarra East road, over a stile and along a planted avenue of eucalypts to the river. The paddock was mercifully clear of cattle which are perhaps accustomed to being hand fed and can be a nuisance. From here we climbed the path by which we arrived. At the top of the hill we diverted to take in views of the mountains to the south. A remarkable amount of construction is in train at the sewage works! Back at the cars at 2:30pm. A walk well worth repeating.

Brian Slee

Pierces Creek Falls and Hardy Range

Participants: Mike Bremers (Leader), Karen, Brian and Trevor.

On Sunday 1 June 2008 I led a group of four on a walk to Pierces Creek Falls from the locked gate on the Pipeline Road. We followed a fire trail for about

3km south along the top of Hardy Range (apparently this trail is not marked on the maps but is clearly visible on Google Earth). We then pushed on through thick regrowth to a few hundred metres north of SH1059 where we encountered a patch of forest relatively unscathed by the 2003 fires.

From here we descended steeply to the east to the falls. Despite the dry autumn we were lucky to find that there was a very small trickle of water over the 25m falls. We had lunch back on the top of Hardy Range, followed the relatively open spur north-west to Cotter Hill and then descended steeply to the Pipeline Road. We arrived back at the car about seven hours after leaving.

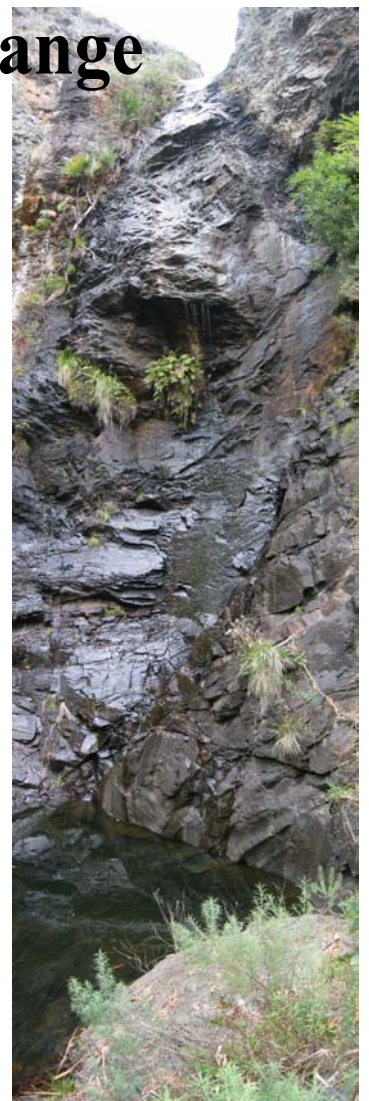
Another route to the falls, possibly easier, would be to descend from the Tidbinbilla Range Road. However such a route, possibly avoiding thick regrowth, would involve a steep descent down a scree slope near the falls. It would be interesting to return to the falls after good rains.

Mike Bremers

Left. Karen, Brian and Trevor on Cotter Hill.

Right. A nearly dry Pierces Creek Falls.

Photos Mike Bremers



Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group celebrates 10th anniversary



On July 12, current and former members, friends and park rangers celebrated 10 years of working in the former Boboyon Pine Forest in the Gudgenby valley. A morning tea was held on the same site where 10 years before the project was officially launched by MLA Brendan Smyth.

In 1998, the task of removing 380ha of pine forest and revegetating with native species seemed a very daunting challenge. But the newly formed group had a vision which, in spite of drought years, fire threats and dwindling numbers of volunteers to complete the task, has been almost fulfilled. All areas of the former plantation have been sown with local species of acacias and eucalypts although some parts have seen more successful growth than others.

The Forestry Hut, just inside the gate from the Yankee Hat carpark, was the venue for morning tea. Eighteen people attended including former ranger Steve Welch and current ranger assisting the group, Dave Whitfield. During the years the group has been very ably assisted by many of the Park staff who have given their time willingly to provide “manpower”, instructions, help with planning tasks and bringing out the trailer on work party days.

Volunteer numbers at the work parties have varied over the years with some former members moving on to

other projects and pastimes, while new recruits have helped to keep the project moving. However, we still have some original members who have continued to give their time. Some former members made the trip out for morning tea and were surprised to see what had been accomplished.

Clive Hurlstone, president, made a speech acknowledging all the hard work volunteers had provided over the years and invited everyone to walk to Hospital Creek, where the first plantings took place, to view the extensive growth of native vegetation that has occurred. A few *Banksia marginata* were planted on a ridge overlooking Hospital Creek to commemorate the occasion.

In addition, a notice board explaining the group’s activities and involvement in the rehabilitation of the plantation was erected near the bushwalking register, and another at Eleanor Grove where *Eucalyptus stellulata* have been planted in memory of Eleanor Stodart who did so much in the early years to get the pine forest removed.

The group would like to pay tribute to original member Frank Clements who sadly died on the weekend of our celebration. He had been a regular attendee at the work parties and has contributed in many ways to the success of the project.

Hazel Rath



Photos. Top left. "Gudgenby bushies" at their 10th anniversary celebrations.

Top right. NPA life member Clive Hurlstone at the party.

Centre left. Bruce Gall and Fiona Macdonald Brand planting a banksia seedling.

Left. Joan Goodrum, a GBRG original, at the anniversary celebrations.

Ted Fleming wins an ACT NRMA Volunteer of the Year award

Canberra Volunteers Day
Sunday 18 May 2008

A Stop Press item in the previous edition of this *Bulletin* noted that Ted Fleming had won the Environment category of the ACT NRMA Volunteer of the Year Awards. Ted is a longstanding and respected member of NPA. He has for many years been a long distance bushwalker having walked all the great walks in Australia, including the Australian Alps, the Bibbulmun, the Heyson and the Hume and Hovell Tracks.

Some of the main points from Ted's citation for the award are as follows.

Ted is a retired Canberra surgeon, and has lived in O'Malley for the last 13 years. Over 10 years ago he began to notice the apparent neglect of the Mugga Mugga Reserve, particularly regarding the invasion of weed species, so he initially started "scratching around myself" removing hawthorn, pyrocantha, cotoneaster and briar rose.

Eventually Ted, upon advice from a Park Care volunteer, approached Environment ACT for assistance. Environment ACT (now Parks Conservation and Lands) were able to assist Ted with herbicide and some tools.

At this stage, Ted started keeping records of the hours spent in "his" nature reserve and now has over 1500 recorded hours. He believes he could add 500 unrecorded hours.

Just about every morning just before sunrise, "because this is when you can better see the weeds", Ted starts work in the Mugga Mugga Reserve. Ted's work includes woody weed control and picking up and removing litter including car parts, tyres and builders' rubbish from the adjacent East O'Malley development. Ted is also a trapper of the pest bird, the Indian myna, working with the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc (CIMAG). He is also an active Southern ACT Catchment Group member and is currently serving on the group's Executive Committee as Treasurer.

Ted's other volunteering life is his involvement with the online gallery of the Australian War Memorial. He declares that most people, except for a few regular walkers within the Mugga Mugga Reserve, would be unaware of



Ted Fleming, NRMA ACT Environment Volunteer of the Year, shows the way.

the impact of his work. This may indeed be the case, but without the Ted Flemings of this world, quietly working away at protecting our native biodiversity the future may be a rather bleak place. There is a range of community groups working in our parks and reserves and in urban and rural areas on local environment issues such as conservation and rehabilitation of river systems, water quality monitoring and urban remnant native vegetation areas.

Ted's nomination was put forward by the Southern ACT Catchment Group Inc, of which Steve Welch is Co-ordinator

NPAC's 2008 Annual Conference

5-7 September, Hobart

The National Parks Australia Council Inc (NPAC) was established on 25 May 1975 to institute regular consultation between state and territory national parks associations and like groups, and to co-ordinate action on a federal level in respect of conservation and park-care matters affecting all groups. Its mission is to protect, promote and extend national park systems within Australia.

This year's annual conference is to be hosted by NPAC's newest member group, the Tasmanian National Parks Association, at the Hobart Campus of the University of Tasmania.

NPA ACT is to be represented by Christine Goonrey, Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz. Christine is honorary secretary of the outgoing NPAC executive, and Kevin is treasurer and public officer. Anne Reeves of the NSW NPA is the current NPAC President.

The AGM formalities and election of Executive is scheduled for Saturday afternoon. The Executive proposes that the Constitution be amended to provide

for the immediate Past President to be an additional member of the Executive.

Annual reports will be provided by each of the member affiliates, TNPA, NPA NSW, VNPA, NPAQ, NCSSA and NPA ACT.

A brief summary of the program is below and a report of outcomes will be published in our next *Bulletin*:

Friday, 5 September: Reception for delegates, followed by a public lecture at the Town Hall, *Challenges for the Future of Tasmania's and Australia's National Parks*.

Saturday, 6 September: Meeting and AGM (including election of new executive) followed by an informal dinner.

Sunday, 7 September: *Getting to Know Tasmania a Little More*.

Presentations: Breakfast Meeting, University of Tasmania

- Peter Mooney, Manager PWS — Management of Tasmania's Reserved Lands
- Kevin Kiernan, School Geography and Environmental Studies — Geoheritage

and Geoconservation and reserved land management

- Anne McConnell, TNPA President — briefing for Recherche Bay field trip.
- Field Trip:** Recherche Bay and Exit Cave Quarry: a day trip south of Hobart.

Recherche Bay. An area on the edge of the TWWHA; the site of the 1792-93 French D'Entrecasteaux Expeditions; a former bay whaling centre; the recently infamous proposed logging area now purchased and managed by the Tasmanian Land Conservancy for conservation; a proposed David Marriner tourist resort; an important local summer camping site; the start of the South Coast Track — in short, an area of interesting conservation politics.

Exit Cave Quarries. A highly significant karst area that was extensively quarried in spite of conservation concerns, but which has been subject to a major rehabilitation program by the PWS since quarrying ceased.

Kevin McCue

PARKWATCH

Follow the leader!

When I go jogging I hate to run with others. I love to meander, choose a street here, drift along and eventually return to the place from where I started. In the bush I can also have this infuriating habit.

Now that behaviour is not quite appropriate for an organised bushwalk. I resist the urge — or become the leader and make it a sanctioned activity! Wandering off is not quite appropriate when the pleasure of others, when the timetable of others, and indeed the safety of others, depends on a little more discipline. In an organised group wandering off and poking heads in nooks and crannies can be infuriating and might end up getting a walker separated from his/her party. The leader is the person who sets the starting time, sets the break times and sets the end time. Those who opt to go on organised activities must accept it is the leader's right and restrict all those independent urges.

When I lead activities I try to do so from the front at the beginning of a walk, whatever the track conditions. It's my way of setting an appropriate pace. I can judge who is walking well, who is lagging, who has blisters and who needs to be told that the next rest spot is just around the next corner. And there is always a tail end "Charlie". For those who want to drift behind and cannot because someone is always there, that's the reason. And at the front? What to do when there is a track junction? Stop! Wait for the party at those points. It is easy to take the wrong option.

So let the leader lead and drift along. Enjoy the walk without the responsibility. Smell the smells, hear the sounds and enjoy the sights. But make sure you are still within sight of someone, front and back, on the conga line.

*Submitted by Brian Everingham
National Parks Journal (NSW)
June–July 2008*

New federal funds for national parks

In late March 2008, Federal Environment Minister, Peter Garrett, announced a major increase in funding to support the creation of protected areas on public and private lands across Australia. NPA and other conservation groups warmly welcomed the announcement.

The National Reserve System

program will receive \$180 million over the next five years. They will fund purchases by park agencies for new national parks and nature reserves in high priority areas. For every dollar spent by NPWS, the Federal Government will provide \$2, re-establishing a recently dropped funding formula. The program will also support purchases by bodies such as Australian Bush Heritage and Australian Wildlife Conservancy.

A new stream of the program will also assist private landholders entering into permanent conservation covenants. Funds can provide landholders with advice, professional services, materials and other practical management support. The program will be complemented by \$50 million for the Indigenous Protected Areas program and other parts of the \$2.25 billion "Caring for Country" initiative that replaces the former Federal Government's Natural Heritage Trust.

*National Parks Journal (NSW)
June–July 2008*

CSIRO report on protected areas

CSIRO has just completed a major report detailing the impact of climate change on Australia's biodiversity and its protected area system. The report *Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Reserve System — A Preliminary Assessment* sets out the magnitude of the challenge we are facing. Its major findings include:

Protecting a wide range of habitat types, using the methods employed by the national reserve system, is the most important strategy for reducing the negative impacts of climate change.

We need to act urgently to secure protection for regions with few or no protected areas.

There are four "wicked threats": changes to water availability, the arrival of new (native and exotic) species in a region, changes in land use and altered fire regimes.

Managing change will largely be about minimising loss.

Managing protected areas will become even more challenging.

Some species may only survive in zoos or gardens.

More information about climate change impacts on our natural world can be found at:

www.climatechange.gov.au/impacts.

*National Parks Journal (NSW)
June–July 2008*

Red Gum parks a national priority

A major new report has identified River Red Gum wetland forests on the Victorian–NSW border as one of the highest priorities for protected areas in Australia. The report highlights the importance of draft Victorian Environmental Assessment Council recommendations to increase protected areas along the Murray from 23% to 65%. Implementing the recommendations "would make a significant contribution to the National Reserve System and protection of biodiversity."

The report echoes the finding from the 2002 National Land and Water Resource Audit that River Red Gum regions were some of the most threatened in Australia. VNPA Executive Director Matt Ruchel says, "We are calling on the Federal, NSW and Victorian governments to cooperate and declare national parks in the Riverina in negotiation with traditional owners. These River Red Gum national parks are essential for the protection of biodiversity, river and wetland health. Without healthy protected areas we will lose not only nationally significant species, but also our valuable nature-based regional tourism economy."

Update VPNA April–May 2008

Washpool victory 25 years on

Members of NPA Clarence Valley and Armidale Branches, along with other locals, gathered to recall the early struggles to save the rainforest that are part of the Washpool story and to celebrate the park after a quarter of a century. From a tumultuous beginning in the early 1980's Washpool National Park has become one of the State's iconic parks reflecting the changing community appreciation of Australian remnant rainforests.

As a tourism resource for the Clarence Valley and the Northern Tablelands, Washpool signifies how communities can make a difference in recognising and protecting their irreplaceable heritage. The conflict between those who saw forest as just raw materials and those who saw special environments helped focus community attention on the need to protect the Washpool so everyone could enjoy it into the future.

(continued next page)

PARKWATCH *(continued)*

The Washpool area has a long history of selective logging, dating back to the 1800's when the valuable red cedar trees attracted the attention of the timber cutters. Development of machinery increased pressure on these forests and met strong protest. The protection of Washpool National Park, which includes the largest remaining stand of coachwood rainforest left in the world, culminated with international recognition when the area was added to the World Heritage list in 1986. Former NSW Premier Neville Wran said that the decision to protect the northern forests was one of the most significant his Government had made.

Washpool National Park is part of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, which ranks our rainforest alongside other global treasures such as the Pyramids, the Taj Mahal and the Grand Canyon.

*National Parks Journal (NSW)
June–July 2008*

ACF campaign leads to legal action on wetlands

In July last year ACF publicly exposed the fact that 500 hectares of wetland had been bulldozed in the Gwydir Valley, north-west NSW. ACF led a campaign to expose this environmental vandalism, ensuring that it received the national media attention it deserved. Our aim was to ensure that the Australian public was aware this precious national environmental asset had been deliberately degraded and that our governments need to take strong action to enforce the law — laws that are designed to protect the habitat of our treasured wildlife!

In February this year, our hard work was rewarded when the new Federal Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, referred the case for consideration of criminal and civil charges by the Director of Public Prosecutions. And on February 26, the NSW Government announced it will take the case to court.

The Gwydir wetlands are one of Australia's top five waterbird breeding sites and are critical to the ongoing survival of many species. The wetlands

were already in an alarming condition with only 5–10% of the original area remaining. In addition, the recent drought has multiplied the stress because of the massive diversion of water for large-scale irrigation.

While this legal action isn't yet decided, and won't bring back the wetlands that had been needlessly cleared of native vegetation and wildlife, it will serve as a strong warning to others to work within the law.

Habitat Vol 36 Number 2: April 2008

Creating a southern link

The first major project under Habitat 141 will concentrate on reconnecting large reserve systems north from the Grampians National Park via the Wimmera River and the Mount Araples–Tooan State Park complex through to the Little Desert National Park. This southern link will also extend southwards down through the Glenelg River and Dergholm State Park complex to the Lower Glenelg National Park.

To succeed, Greening Australia and other partners involved in the project will need to secure blocks of degraded or marginal farmland, either by buying properties or through covenanting arrangements, and replant these areas with a mix of local native plants. The work will increase vegetation cover and enable species to move within the landscape. Also important is the need to restore degraded bushland, improve the health of local wetlands and waterways and control pests, weeds and salinity.

One of the best ways of improving water quality is to replant native vegetation along river systems. The southern link will aim to restore stream-side vegetation, creating wildlife corridors along the Wimmera and Glenelg river systems. Water quality is important for many local species including the Cape Barren Goose, platypus and freshwater crayfish. The southern link will help restore rare

ecosystems including the nationally threatened Buloke Grassy Woodlands, Manna gum and Lowland forests.

Park watch (Vic) June 2008

Mulga lands protected for future generations

The Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation, Andrew McNamara, formally recognised the creation of the Jamba Dhanda Duringal (Place of happy frogs) nature refuge, 115 kilometres east of Cunnamulla and said "A remarkable new nature refuge in south-west Queensland is set to strengthen nature- and culture-based economic opportunities for the Kooma Traditional Owners of the area."

Mr McNamara celebrated the conservation agreement on site with the Kooma people, who have protected 23,000 hectares of their traditional land between the Balonne and Warrego rivers. The State government has provided \$539,000 to help manage the nature refuge.

"The Environmental Partnerships Scheme provides financial incentives to reward and encourage best management practice," Mr McNamara said. "This new nature refuge is the largest and most diverse protected area in the Mulga Land Bioregion, featuring claypans, and shallow lakes, a waterhole, woodlands, shrublands, herbfields and grasslands. Through the Nature Refuge Program, people like the Kooma Traditional Owners make an invaluable contribution to protecting native plants and animals for the future, and helping our wildlife and natural systems cope with climate change".

NPA News (Qld) June 2008

Compiled by Hazel Rath



Len Haskew, NPA's newest Life Member at Gorilla Rock, near Honeysuckle. Len is at right.

NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar				
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Public holidays		Mon 6	Tues 4	Thur 25 Fri 26
General meetings	Thur 18	Thur 17	Thur 20	—
Committee meetings	Tues 2	Tues 7	Tues 4	Tues 2
NPA ACT Christmas Party				Sun 14 ¹
Gudgeny Bush Regeneration ²	Sat 13	Sat 11	Sat 8	Sat 13 ³
Further details: 1 NPA Christmas Party at the Readycut Hut, Gudgenby				
2 Yankee Hat car park 10:00am contact Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592(h) 0407 783 422(mob)				
3 Includes GBRG Christmas party				

General Meetings

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

8:00pm

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

NPA Christmas Party

Sunday, 14 December


**“Readycut Hut”
Gudgenby Valley**

from 11:30am


This year we plan to hold our Christmas Party at the Readycut Hut in the Gudgenby Valley. Follow Old Boboyan Road towards Yankee Hat carpark, turn right at sign about 1km along.

All the usual features; bring your picnic lunch and Christmas cheer — nibbles, Christmas cake and some drinks will be provided.

Contact: NPA committee members.



Check *Burning Issues* for details.




New members

The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:

Jenny Goddard
Garry and Margaret Hulme


We look forward to seeing these members at NPA activities.



See the outings program for details of the
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group’s
Christmas lunch on its work party day
Saturday, 13 December

Contacts: Michael Goonrey 6231 8395
cgoonrey@grapevine.com.au
or
Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422
cjhurls@bigpond.net.au

This *Bulletin* was put together by:
Editor: Max Lawrence
Production and design: Adrienne Nicholson
Sub-editor: Graeme Wicks



The NPA ACT website is hosted by our generous sponsor, Encode.

Photo competition images

A number of photos from the recent photo competition are being held in the office for use in future displays, etc. If contributors wish their images to be returned, please contact Martin Chalk on 6292 3502 or email mchalk@grapevine.com.au

Front cover photographs

Main photo. *Rendezvous Creek. Photo Christine Goonrey. Winner of the “members’ choice” prize in the NPA photo competition.*

Insets. *European wasps tending cells in their nest. From Urban Services information brochure (pages 6–9).*

Len Haskew, the association’s newest life member (page 5).

Giant flora on Mt Kenya (page 12).

General Meetings

Thursday 18 September

Walking in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and on the South Coast Track in Tas- mania

Liz Harman: NPA member

Liz, accompanied by five other walkers, undertook these two walks in October and November 2007. As well as the landscapes and the plants, Liz was very interested in the birdlife living with the extremes of Tasmania's changeable weather.

Thursday 16 October

Marine parks

Dr Brendan Kelaher: Manager,
Batemans Marine Park,
Department of Environment and
Climate Change, NSW

"The greatest trick ever pulled by lobbyists was convincing people that marine parks are an exercise in fisheries management."

Thursday 20 November

Sustainability and a wide brown land

Dr Denis Saunders AM:

President, WWF-Australia. Chair of Sara Halvedene Foundation. Member of the Australian Heritage Council and one of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists.

From an environmental point of view, by any measure one cares to use we are going backwards. With the exception of airsheds over our major cities, things are getting worse. Despite the environment being a major issue of public debate, most people do not know the extent of environmental issues facing us. This talk examines this lack of knowledge and the consequences.

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>	Vacant		
<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
Chris Emery	6249 7604 (h)	chris.emery@optusnet.com.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

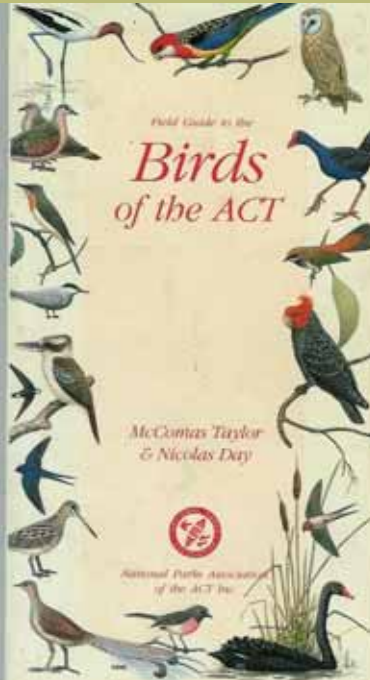
Contributions of articles, letters, drawings and photographs are always welcome. Items accepted for publication may also be published on the NPA website. Send all items to The *Bulletin* Team, admin@npaact.org.au, or the postal address above.

Deadline for the December 2008 issue: 31 October 2008

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Publications of the National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.



Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT
McComas Taylor and Nicolas Day

A very useful field guide enabling identification of any bird likely to be seen in the ACT and nearby areas. It has easy-to-follow text, key biological data and colour illustrations in a compact format. Usually male, female and young forms are shown, with a note on "similar species" where confusion may occur. Rare visitors and likely aviary escapees are listed in an appendix.

Recommended retail price \$19.95



Field guide to the Native Trees of the ACT

Second edition, 2007

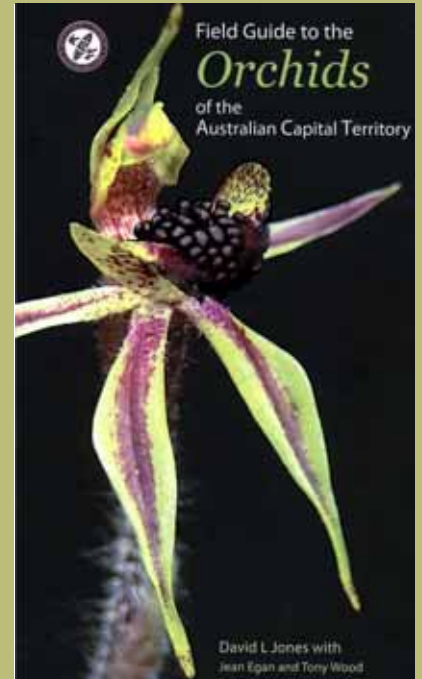
Authors: Laurie Adams, Roger Farrow, John Hook, Peter Ormay and Andrew Slee

Illustrations: Betsy Osborne and Christine Payne

Photographers: Roger Farrow, Pierre Cochard and Clive Hurlstone

Descriptions, colour photographs, identification sketches, with thumbnail maps for some species, assist the non-botanist to identify the 61 species found in the ACT.

Recommended retail price \$27.50



Field Guide to the Orchids of the Australian Capital Territory

Text and original drawings: David L Jones

Digital enhancement of drawings: Jean Egan

Principal photographer: Tony Wood

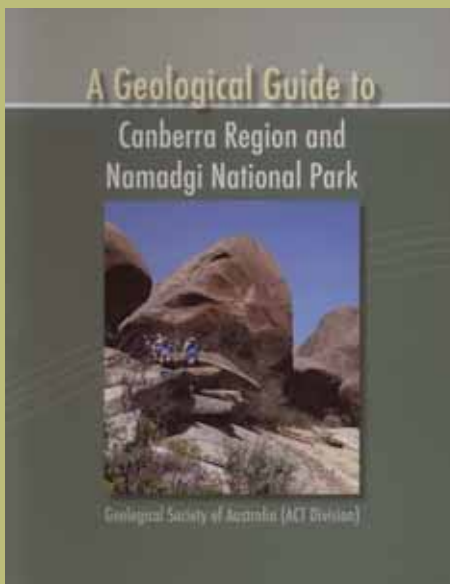
A high quality, comprehensive guide to the local native orchids; invaluable for both the novice and experienced orchid enthusiast. Excellent colour photographs, large botanical illustrations and full descriptions of the 121 species found in the ACT, with local distribution notes.

Recommended retail price \$38.50

Available from bookshops or the National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.

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

A publication partly sponsored by the National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.



A Geological Guide to Canberra Region and Namadgi National Park

Geological Society of Australia (ACT Division)

Compiled by: D M Finlayson

Contributors: R S Abell, D L Strusz, P Wellman, M J Rickard, D Clark, K McCue, K S W Campbell, K G McQueen, B Pillans

This guide seeks to answer some of the frequently-asked-questions about the geology of the Canberra region including Namadgi National Park. It is aimed at the general public, students and tourists, while being of considerable interest to natural historians in the region, helping to explain how the beautiful Canberra region landscapes and habitats evolved.

Recommended retail price \$29.70

This guidebook is one of three new products from the Geological Society of Australia (ACT Division) presenting geological information about this region. The production was partly sponsored by the NPA ACT following interest from our symposium in 2006.

Guidebook. *A Geological Guide to Canberra Region and Namadgi National Park.*

Map. *Geology of the Australian Capital Territory.* 1:100 000, compiled by Robert Abell.

CD. *Geology of the Australian Capital Territory.*

All three products are on sale at Geoscience Australia and Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre; the guidebook and map are at the National Library and the ANU Co-op Bookshop; the guidebook is at the Botanic Gardens Bookshop, the National Museum of Australia, Old Parliament House and Paperchain Bookstore Manuka.