



# The Granite Belt Naturalist



Stanthorpe Field Naturalists Club Inc., PO BOX 154, Stanthorpe, QLD 4380  
Web Site: [www.granitenet.com.au/groups/environment/fieldnats/](http://www.granitenet.com.au/groups/environment/fieldnats/)

## AIMS OF THE CLUB

1. To study all branches of Natural History
2. Preservation of the flora and fauna of Queensland
3. Encourage a spirit of protection towards native birds, animals and plants
4. Assist, where possible, in scientific research
5. Publish a monthly newsletter for the information of members.

*Meetings:* 4th Wednesday of each month at QCWA Rooms, Victoria Street, Stanthorpe, at 7.30pm.

*Outings:* The Sunday preceding the 4th Wednesday of each month, (Friday outings as pre-arranged).

NOTE; the latest status of any outing is posted to the FieldNats web site as soon as possible.



*The Pyramids*

## WEB EDITION

If you have downloaded this from our web site but are not a member of the Stanthorpe Field Nats please let us know by email to [fieldnats@granitenet.com.au](mailto:fieldnats@granitenet.com.au), so that we can see how well used the newsletter is.  
Thank you.

## CLUB OFFICE BEARERS - 2009/2010

President:	Kris Carnell	46835268
Vice-presidents :	Rob McCosker	46835371
	Michael Mueller	46811421
Secretary:	Halina Kruger	46835206
Treasurer:	Carol Smallwood	46811034
Newsletter Editor:	Michael Jefferies;	46812389
Magazine Cmtee:	Wendy & Neil Donges	46812913
Publicity Officer:	Janet Hockings	46811978
Librarian:	Trish McCosker	46835371

Management Committee: President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer.

**The Club acknowledges the support of the Gambling Community Benefit Fund in the production of this newsletter and the purchase of a data projector.**

## COMING UP

- Friday, 4th February. Back Creek -Kris Carnell.
- Sunday, 20th February. The Sphinx & Turtle Rock - Rob & Trish McCosker.
- Friday 4th March. Short Walk, TBA.
- Sunday 20th March. Brown's Falls -Carol Smallwood

**Deadline for next newsletter:  
28th February 2011**

## SCALE OF DIFFICULTY FOR WALKS ON NATS OUTINGS

1. Flat walking, road or track
2. Road or track, gentle hills
3. Track, some hilly sections
4. Track, some steep sections
5. Cross country, easy open forest, gentle slopes
6. Track, steep sections common, with steps
7. Cross country, some hills, some thick undergrowth
8. Cross country, steep sections with scrambles over rocks, etc., and some thick undergrowth
9. Cross country, steep, hilly, rough, thick undergrowth
10. Mountain climbing, hard going, higher level of fitness or plenty of time required.

This document is on the website above for download. If there is anyone who would prefer to get their copy from the website, please email [fieldnats@granitenet.com.au](mailto:fieldnats@granitenet.com.au) for inclusion on the email notification list. The website will have the document before it reaches you by post.

## NOTES

### REMEMBER

Changes to the program appear on our very own web site as soon as I can get them on, keep an eye on <http://www.granitenet.com.au/groups/environment/fieldnats> when you can. If the summer continues as it started I think changes to the program at short notice are even more likely than before! – *Michael Jefferies*

### *Pre-Outing Reports*

Friday February 4th, 2011.

For our outing on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February we hope to walk to some falls on Back Creek at Severnlea. The falls are upstream from the orchard of Alan Carnell and family. Back Creek does not run all the time but has a good flow at the moment. We will meet at Weeroona Park at 9 a.m. and travel to the property on Carnell's Road. We will probably do a circuit walk from the end of the orchard up to the falls and then further up the hill to another orchard before returning down a farm track. At the time of writing this report we have been unable to do a pre-outing walk owing to the weather. If the prevailing conditions are unsuitable to get to the falls on the day we will go somewhere else.

*Kris Carnell*

Sunday, February 20<sup>th</sup> 2011.

The wet weather has made life interesting for everyone I'm sure, and doing a pre-outing in the Girraween National Park, which was temporarily closed, was no exception. Fortunately we were able to do a walk out to the Sphinx and Turtle Rock, the only tracks that the Park rangers had managed to clear, so that is our destination for the February outing.

We will meet as usual at Weeroona Park at 9.00am to drive to Girraween and park in the Castle Rock camp ground, that is, on the southern side of the road. We will have morning tea at the cars but carry lunch to have somewhere along the way. It is not a very long walk, about 7.5km, and rated at grade 3 with the best part being that it is mostly downhill on the way back to the cars, which we should reach by 3.00pm. If it is anything like our pre-outing be prepared for plenty of ringing in the ears – there were lots of cicadas!

*Rob McCosker Phone 46835371*

## OUTING REPORTS

### Broadwater State Forest, November 5.

A small group of us gathered at Weeroona Park and went to the the entrance track that goes into the Broadwater SF about 100m further along Glenlyon Drive past the Happy Valley Resort. We set off, led by Michael Mueller in a westerly direction seeing a number of plants in flower until we came to the granite outcrops that face south of west overlooking the Amiens Road with excellent views of the properties towards the Texas Road and beyond. The weather was mainly fine but with the threat of showers. On the granite slope we had morning tea and then went in a north-easterly direction round the side of the highest point before ascending to the summit. In the process we passed several pools on the granite which earlier in the spring had a number of small crustaceans that are confined to this ephemeral habitat but they were not visible. Michael Mueller said that he knew of another granite slope a bit further to the west but it was decided that the weather was becoming more unreliable (as it proved) so we returned to the vehicles. *Michael Jefferies*

### Nundubbemere Falls, November 21.



Our return visit to the Nundubbemere Falls allowed us to see the falls at a complete contrast to the previous visit. Ten Nats members travelled in convoy through some very green countryside to the Falls car-park. When we arrived and parked we could hear the sound of the river running over the falls. After our cuppa we started the descent down the steep ridge to the river. There was already evidence of a number of different wild flowers. About halfway down Monday Creek came into view with a good flow over it's falls. At the

bottom we made our way carefully across the rocks to the edge of the pool below the falls. The pool was covered with lots of foam and there were lots of photo opportunities to be had.

After quite a while we decide to see how far we could walk upstream. Firstly we made our way around the falls and came back to the edge of the top of the falls for more photos. The walk

upstream wasn't too hard and we reached the base of a gully that comes down from the road in time for lunch.



After lunch three of our group left to return home and the rest of us walked toward the Top Falls. Five of us walked up past the hut on the northern bank to a vantage point where we could get a look at the river above the falls. We decided that there was no point in continuing further upstream so we retraced our steps back to our lunch spot. We then walked up the gully to our vehicles where we had afternoon tea before returning to Stanthorpe. Two of the vehicles returned via the Beendee Lane for a change of scenery.

*Kris Carnell*

Plant list: White daisy (maybe *Brachyscome*), *Ajuga sp*, *Rostellularia adscendens* (small pink upright herb with a hooded flower), Australian bluebell, *Goodenia hederacea*, *Dianella sp*, Tiny pink flower related to carnation, White dianella, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* (Yellow buttons), *Stackhousia monogyna*, *Anthropodium fimbriatum* (Chocolate lily), *Hibbertia sp* (spiny leaves), *Isotoma anethifolia*, Garnia grass, Verbena weed, Scarlet pimpernel, Bulbine lily, *Melaleuca alternifolia*, *Leptospermum sp*, *Callistemon viminalis*, *Caltrix tetragona* flowers & bracts, *Pelargonium australe*, Cobbler's peg, Dandelion, Green berry, *Swainsonia sp*, Bishop's ?, *Pterostylus rufa*, *Jasminum suavisimum*, Tiny daisy-like white flower.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Stanthorpe Field Naturalist Club Inc.  
Held in QCWA Rooms, Victoria st, Stanthorpe on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

**Meeting opened:** 7.38pm

**Attendance:** 17 Apologies 2 as per attendance book

**Minutes of the previous meeting:**

H Kruger moved seconded R McCosker **carried**

**Business arising from the minutes:** nil

**Correspondence:**

H Kruger moved seconded C Smallwood **carried**

**Financial Report:** \$1299.83

C Smallwood moved seconded M Jefferies **carried**

**Outing Reports:**

Weekday outing: M Mueller Broadwater SF

Weekend outing: K Carnell re Nundubbermere top falls

**Pre-outings:**

Week day outing: 4<sup>th</sup> February - Carnells to organize outing

Weekend outing: 20<sup>th</sup> February - The Sphinx & Turtle Rock.

**General Business:**

C Hockings moved that the insurance account of \$450 be paid while group is on Christmas break  
Seconded L Hazelgrove

**Next Meeting:** 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011

**Specimens/ Items of interest:**

I Milinovich - photo of *Boronia ruppilii*, a rare species from Woods Reef, east of Barraba, NSW

**Meeting closed:** 8:00 pm

**Presentation:** E Walker - Patagonia, South America. Splendid pictures of a remote region.

*The following item was submitted by Errol Walker with permission from the copyright holder.*

**ROADS**

We have a few here in the Cradle Mountain and Lakes District. What's mainly wrong with society today is that too many Dirt Roads have been paved. There's not a problem in Australia today - crime, drugs, education, divorce, & delinquency that wouldn't be remedied if we just had more Dirt Roads, because Dirt Roads give character. People who live at the end of Dirt Roads learn early on that life is a bumpy ride... that it can jar you right down to your teeth sometimes, but it's worth it if at the end is home, a loving spouse, happy kids and a dog. We wouldn't have near the trouble with our education system if our kids got their exercise walking a Dirt Road with other kids, from whom they learn how to get along. There was less crime in our streets before they were paved. Criminals didn't walk two dusty miles to rob or rape if they knew they'd be welcomed by five barking dogs and a double-barrel shotgun. And there were no drive-by shootings. Our values were better when our roads were worse! People did not worship their cars more than their kids, and motorists were more courteous. They didn't tailgate by riding the bumper; or the car in front would have choked you with dust and broken your windscreen with stones. Dirt Roads taught patience. Dirt Roads were environmentally friendly. You didn't hop in your car for a litre of milk. You walked to the cow shed for your milk. For your mail, you walked to the mailbox. What if it rained and the Dirt Road got washed out? That was the best part. Then you stayed home and had some family time: roasted marshmallows and popped popcorn, had a pony ride on Dad's shoulders; and you learned how to make prettier quilts than anybody. At the end of Dirt Roads, you soon learned that bad words tasted like soap. Most paved roads lead to trouble. Dirt Roads more likely lead to a fishing creek or a swimming hole. At the end of a Dirt Road, the only time we ever locked our car was in February, because if we didn't, some neighbour would fill it with too much zucchini. At the end of a Dirt Road, there was always extra springtime income from when city slickers would get stuck. You'd have to hitch up old Dobbin and pull them out. Usually you got five bob. Always you got a new friend - at the end of a Dirt Road.

***Paul Harvey***

### **Bazza and his mates drop in**

During the afternoon of Tuesday November 9<sup>th</sup>, some of the smaller birds (Yellow-faced honeyeaters and White-naped honeyeaters etc.) which frequent the garden and surrounds, were sounding upset. Rosellas, Pigeons and Peaceful doves, Scrub wrens and Blue wrens all appeared to panic and quickly disperse to shelter amongst the thick foliage. On investigation I found a group of four Pacific Baza (Crested Hawks, *Aviceda subcristata*) crashing about in the tree tops, foraging for insects. These uncommon to scarce hawks are 38cm to 43cm in size easily distinguished by a small crest and bold dark bars across the chest. Crested hawks, usually found in small flocks, hover around the tree canopies feeding on phasmids (stick insects). It is also reported in Slaters, "Field Guide to Australian Birds" that Crested Hawks also eat tree frogs and fruit such as native figs. They build a nest similar to a pigeon's located in a leafy upright fork towards the top of a tree. Other birds are not smart enough to realize that these insect-eaters are not a threat. They merely see them as another bird-of-prey.

See <http://birdsinbackyards.net/species/Aviceda-subcristata> for more! Ed.

### **Other interesting bird visitors**



Do we have a Powerful Owl (*Ninox rufa*) visiting at night?

For the last couple of nights we have been listening to a very deep and resonant double hoot coming from the tree tops. It is not a call with which we are familiar having previously heard and seen Boobooks, Barn and Barking owls and Tawny frogmouths around the garden. Powerful Owls can be up to 55cm and

larger for males so it would be wonderful to find its daytime roost to have a good look at him or her. They feed on small possums, rabbits and some birds which certainly are in plentiful supply around the garden. We shall keep looking into the tree-tops and keep an ear out for small birds that seem to have a knack for finding anything unusual in their territory!

See <http://birdsinbackyards.net/species/Ninox-strenua> Ed. Has a recording of the call.

This morning, our little bird "watch-dogs" alerted us yet again to something we should investigate. Sitting quietly in our flowering almond tree out from the kitchen, was a White-headed Pigeon (*Columba leucomela*). These are a large plump pigeon, 32cm-42cm, distinguishable by a white head and chest, red beak and eye with a dark glossy back. These pigeons are found all along the east coast as far south as Victoria but usually in rainforest and scrub where it feeds on fruits. Another first for us here.

See <http://birdsinbackyards.net/species/Columba-leucomela> for some interesting comments on this species. Ed.

Col & Janet Hockings; November 2010