

KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY.



Hoary-headed Grebe  
BE A BIRD LOVER  
JOIN THE GUILD LEAGUE OF BIRD LOVERS  
SEI EIN VOGEL-FREUND!  
AMATE GLI UCCELLI  
AMATE TA ROTTAIA.

No.8. March 1972

Patron: Mr. Allen A. Strom  
Advisor in Conservation  
Dept. of Education

"There is enough for everybody's  
need, but not enough for everybody's  
greed". -Mahatma Gandhi.

IN THIS ISSUE:

OUR SOCIETY: New members; Meetings; Nature Trail; Hands off Cliffs;  
Outings; Library--New Books.

REPORTS: President's Report; Bungonia Gorge Inspection;  
Blue Mountains Environment Preservation Association.

Nature Notes: Mountain Trees; Bird watchers Notebook;  
Fire-arms Prohibited.

Please send articles and news for the next issue before 30th May.  
Acting Editor: Graham Alcorn, P.O. Box 39, Blackheath. 2785

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OUR SOCIETY

New Members: The Society welcomes Mr. & Mrs. W. Jago of Lawson  
Mrs. Millar of Wentworth Falls, Mrs. L. Griffin of  
Leura and Mr. Brian Nicky of Blackheath.

Annual General

Meeting; The next meeting- the Annual General Meeting- will be  
held at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 30th March, in the  
Conservation Hut. Office bearers for the coming  
year to be elected.

Members' Night:

The following meeting will be Thursday 27th April  
and will be a members' night. Members are invited  
to bring along any items of interest they have,  
and to talk about them for approximately five minutes.

Visiting Society:

on Sunday 26th March the Hawkesbury District  
Conservation Society is planning to spend their  
monthly field day at our Conservation Hut. We have  
assured them of a warm welcome.

Working Bees:

There have been four working bees so far this year.  
Work has been on the herbarium, the magazines, some  
carpentry in the Hut, and weed removing and tidying  
around the Hut. The working bees now start at 2 p.m.  
This is proving popular--people turning up whenever  
they can during the afternoon-- even the nine-to-fivers  
can strike a short blow. About 6 p.m. we barbecue chops.  
The working bees are usually held on Mondays.  
Details are posted on the notice board.

Kaubs write:

The Society has received two letters from Martin &  
Betty Kaub who are still overseas. They have included  
conservation matters in their busy itinerary, and are  
not impressed with the way things are going in Europe.

Nature Trail:

The recent continual heavy rain has done considerable  
damage to the track. However the new bridge which  
the 530A Management Committee had put over the swamp is  
highly satisfactory, and the area repaired by members  
at last year's working bees is in good condition, thanks  
to the expert guidance of our Ranger-President.



It will be a pity if the Nature Trail is in poor condition when Isobel Bowden's illustrated map (now in the hands of the printer) and her notes are ready for sale to the public. There is a lot of work to be done on the Trail, so please come and help at the working bees if you possibly can.

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Business: In February the committee decided that in future the Guest Speaker will be heard before the business of the meeting is conducted.

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We will be glad to welcome anyone who might be able to join us on our outings, held on the first Saturday each month. For particulars phone Wentworth Falls 293  
Nora Dillon

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#### LIBRARY -- NEW BOOKS

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Australia's Venomous Wildlife: By John Stackhouse (Pub.1970).

Donated by Mrs Beryl Heycraft. The author, an experienced journalist, approaches his subject not as an expert, but as a reporter keenly aware of the oecological importance of conserving this interesting aspect of our unique environment. He gives a comprehensive list of these somewhat notorious creatures, with appropriate first aid treatment. Many unusual photographs by John Caremolla are a feature of this book, some acquired under hazardous conditions.

Growing Australian Native Plants: By F.J.C.Rogers (Pub.1971)

Donated by Miss Jennifer Tucker. An authoritative book covering many aspects of this fascinating subject and it should prove particularly interesting to those wishing to create a native garden. Lavishly illustrated by fine photography and there is also a chapter on attracting birds to the garden.

We are happy to find our library is gradually growing and thank the interested donors who help in this way.

Margaret Pinniger

#### WARATAH SEEDS

Donated by Mr.Lukacs from his garden are much appreciated and are selling well at the Hut.

#### PET FOODS

No kangaroo, whale, buffalo or horse meat is used in "LUV" or "JETS" brand pet foods, says a letter to our Society from Mr. W.A. Ross, Chairman of Quaker Products Aust. Ltd.

#### FIREARMS PROHIBITED IN BLUE MOUNTAINS

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

Australian Conservation Federation. A meeting was held recently in Philip Street Sydney to discuss formation of a regional chapter of the Australian Conservation Federation.

Mr. R.D. Piesse, the Director, gave a report on recent activities; and the chair was occupied by the Rt. Hon. Sir Garfield Barwick, G.C.M.G.

The pitifully small crowd at this centrally situated hall engaged in some spirited discussion, thanks to Mr. Milo Dunphy, and perhaps the long felt need of a headquarters for local Conservation bodies may yet be solved in conjunction with the A.C.F., who also need an office here.

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It is not tied by State borders, can testify before National or State bodies, and has the prestige of people like Sir Garfield Barwick and the new President, H.R.H. Prince Philip. What could a body like this with 50,000 or 100,000 members not do to halt the destruction of our environment?

FINE HUT DUTY: The Society owes much to the volunteers who keep the Hut open year after year, providing a service to the community, earning funds for the conservation movement, and spreading the conservation message.

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Wilson Alcorn.

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There were also notes on how to be a bird watcher, while fine action studies of birds in flight had won one bird watcher international fame.

\*\*\*\*\*Isobel Bowden.

MYALL LAKES TOURS.

The Myall Lakes Committee has commenced regular coach-boat weekend tours of the area. Our Vice-President and his wife, Bob and Nancy Douglass, are going, but too late for us to print their impressions. For details of tours please ring John Scott, (948-8016).

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The needs of industry can be well served from present leases, estimated to contain 35 years supply. Only final protection is to add the area to Morton National Park.

Please write to local member and the Ministers for Mines and Lands opposing this lease and calling for its inclusion in the Morton National Park.

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MOUNTAIN TREES.

In the early days of the Mountain road, fine trees grew on the ridges. In this regard it should be remembered that Blaxland and his companions were familiar with the enormous trees in forests on the North Shore, near Kissing Point and Ryde, where trees grew to two hundred feet and more, and a German wood-cutter lived in a hollow tree on the bank of the Parramatta River with his bed and kitchen furniture.

Thus if fine trees were mentioned, it would be reasonable to suppose they were really big compared with any known today. Rusden's Tree near Springwood was said to be eighty feet to the first branch. Good forest extended all along the shale area between Glenbrook - Warrimoo, and also in the volcanic area near Springwood.

On the Higher Mts. also very good trees grew in areas from Leura to Blackheath and Mt. Victoria, though possibly not to be compared with the Lower Mts. Here and there on the main road and scattered amongst the settlements there are still some very fine native trees to be seen. One of the most pleasing groups being the Blud Mountain Ash at the Katoomba Hospital, and also at Mount St. Mary's College. (Euc. oreades).

The largest trees are probably now confined to the sheltered gullies, where a turpentine has been measured with a base of 20 feet, a blue gum (E. deanei) of 24 feet, and a fallen coachwood (Ceratopetalum) with base of 10 feet and height of 100 at Leura.

Have you any interesting records? If so send along to your editor. We would like to find the biggest, the tallest, and most beautiful.

Isobel K. Bowden

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WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?  
(by Professor Robert May.)

What is needed is numbers of ordinary people who will devote their energy towards any particular one of the multitudinous detailed facets of the overall problem. While one should keep in mind the complexity of the total problem, one should not be overwhelmed nor discouraged by it, but should realise that the cumulative pressure of many people nibbling away at individual aspects may well bring about the necessary change in public consciousness.

Thus, I would urge that individuals choose a specific problem that they can relate to: This can be fighting to save the Colong Caves, or to save our remaining beaches from rutile mining industry, or establishing a particular national park, or combating industrial pollution in the Parramatta River, or endeavouring to reform the abortion laws.

Alternatively, it can be participating in local council politics, or joining the local branch of the Liberal or Labour Parties in an effort to begin at the grass-roots of our policies! Or it can be writing letters to the papers, politicians, industrialists or others, or a host of like activities.

In one's private life a commitment can be made to conservation and frugality, rather than careless consumption and waste: This ranges from trivial things such as not trading in the car annually, when possible, renouncing gratuitously wasteful household practices, through to big things such as giving serious thought to family size. Avoiding non-returnable bottles and wastefully-packaged goods when possible.

The widespread contemporary feeling that the individual is helpless and irrelevant, the feeling of anomie and dissociation from society, is a symptom of the sickness of our times. If everyone who read this evangelical effusion tried to make their own small contribution to the struggle, it would make a difference.

In the long run, the task is to make a revolution in man's habits, changing from a culture and an economy based on growth to a culture and an economy based on conservation and stability.

This task needs You!

--From Science Yearbook 1970, substantially  
as printed in the Union Recorder, June 1971

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BLUE MOUNTAINS ENVIRONMENT PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION.

The quarterly meeting held at Lawson on the 6th, March was well attended and an enthusiastic one in spite of shocking weather. Space does not permit a detailed report, but it is obvious that the association is getting results from its approaches to various bodies, and that it will play a major role in the struggle to retain the present character of the mountains.

It is especially pleasing to note the member's concern for native trees, and surely anyone who observes the present magnificent flowering of Eucalypts, such as the stately Blue Mountain Ash (*E. oreades*) must share this concern for their survival.

To Join this organisation is to make a positive contribution to the future. Membership is \$1. per year or 50¢ for pensioners. Payable to the treasurer, Alderman Mrs. J. Crick of Faulconbridge, or to the Secretary, Mr. Ted Foster of Warrimoo.

Wilson Alcorn  
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FROM A BIRDWATCHER'S NOTE BOOK

Honey Parrots

Early in December there was a profuse flowering of the Sydney Peppermint Gum (Euc. piperita). Several small flocks of Little Lorikeets were observed feeding on the nectar from the blossom

These cheerful honey parrots fly at high speed from place to place, calling constantly "Gizz,gizz" and travel long distances in search of flowering trees. Bright green with red faces, they are not much larger than a Budgerigar, but plumper and with a short tail.

Despite their bright colours, when a flock flies into a gum tree they disappear among the leaves and are very hard to observe. We were fortunate in having a splendid view of a pair feeding in a small flowering mallee. They are not common in the Upper Mountains.

Unusual Cockatoos.

At Sublime Point, Leura, on Feb.6th we heard a soft wheezing call -- the Glossy Black Cockatoo. Three of them were sitting on a bare branch, preening. One called constantly, a thin begging call -- apparently this year's youngster.

A lot smaller than the familiar Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, the male bird is brownish-black, like an oversized, dark brown Gang-Gang. He has a broad bright red tail band. The female has yellow markings on head and neck, tail band orange yellow barred with black.

Although seldom seen in these parts, when found they are very tame and easy to observe. They are never far from the Forest Oaks (Casuarinas), feeding on the seed. Over the past year we have seen a pair 3or4 times, always where the trees grow -- half way down the Giant Staircase, and at Burradoo lookout on the Prince Henry Cliff Walk.

A Beautiful Flycatcher

On our outing to Lithgow Zig Zag on February 5th we were excited to see the Satin Flycatcher--and not just one, but five. This was our first sighting of this sprightly, beautiful bird, although the late Keith Hindwood "Australian Birds in Colour" writes that it has been reported as the commonest bird in the bush in summer in the Oberon and Lithgow districts.

Then a pair turned up on 28th February in Katoomba Cascades area and stayed for a few days, catching insects among the tall gums, as is their habit.

The male has shining blue-black plumage on back, head and chest, with pure white underparts. Female slatey-grey above, throat and breast rufous. Both can erect the head feathers into a semi-crest. They are slim active birds and constantly quiver the tail up and down.

Like its near relative, the Leaden Flycatcher, the Satin Flycatcher migrates north in Autumn and returns in Spring. We have several observations of Leaden Flycatchers passing through but until now the Satin has evaded us. The Leaden is a similar bird but lead-grey on the back.

*This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in September 2020 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.*

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NO 8 MARCH 1972

Patron: Mr Allen A Strom, Advisor in Conservation Dept. of Education.

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OUR SOCIETY: New members; Meetings; Nature Trail; Hands off Cliffs; Outings; Library – New Books.

REPORTS: President’s Report, Bungonia Gorge Inspection; Blue Mountains Environment Preservation Association.

Nature Notes: Mountain Trees; Bird watcher’s Notebook; Fire-arms Prohibited.

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Acting Editor: Graham Alcorn, PO Box 39, Blackheath. 2785

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Meeting: The next meeting – the Annual General Meeting – will be held at 8pm on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> March, in the Conservation Hut. Office bearers for the coming year to be elected.

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Visiting Society: on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March the Hawkesbury District Conservation Society is planning to spend their monthly field day at our Conservation Hut. We have assured them of a warm welcome.



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In the early days of the Mountain road, fine trees grew on the ridges. In this regard it should be remembered that Blaxland and his companions were familiar with the enormous trees in forests on the North Shore, near Kissing Point and Ryde, where trees grew to two hundred feet and more, and a German wood-cutter lived in a hollow tree on the banks of the Parramatta River with his bed and kitchen furniture.

Thus if fine trees were mentioned, it would be reasonable to suppose they were really big compared with any known today. Rusden's Tree near Springwood was said to be eighty feet to the first branch. Good forest extended all along the shale area between Glenbrook – Warrimoo, and also in the volcanic area near Springwood.

On the Higher Mountains, also very good trees grew in areas from Leura to Blackheath and Mt Victoria, though possibly not to be compared with the Lower Mountains. Here and there on the main road and scattered amongst the settlements there are still some very fine native trees to be seen. One of the most pleasing groups being the Blue Mountains Ash at the Katoomba Hospital, and also at Mount Mary's College. (*Eucalyptus Oreades*)

The largest trees are probably now confined to the sheltered gullies, where a turpentine has been measured with a base of 20 feet, a blue gum (*Eucalyptus Deanei*) of 24 feet, and a fallen coachwood (*Ceratopetalum*) with base of 10 feet and height of 100 at Leura.

Have you any interesting records? If so send along to your editor. We would like to find the biggest, the tallest and most beautiful....Isobel K Bowden.

## WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED? (by Professor Robert May.)

What is needed is numbers of ordinary people who will devote their energy towards any particular one of the multitudinous detailed facets of the overall problem. While one should keep in mind the complexity of the total problem, one should not be overwhelmed nor discouraged by it, but should realise that the cumulative pressure of many people nibbling away at individual aspects may well bring about the necessary change in public consciousness.

Thus, I would urge that individuals choose a specific problem that they can relate to. This can be fighting to save the Colong Caves, or to save our remaining beaches from rutile mining industry, or establishing a particular national park, or combating industrial pollution in the Parramatta River, or endeavouring to reform the abortion laws.

Alternatively, it can be participating in local council politics, or joining the local branch of the Liberal or Labor Parties in an effort to begin at the grass-roots of our policies! Or it can be writing letters to the papers, politicians, industrialists or others, or a host of like activities.

In one's private life a commitment can be made to conservation and frugality, rather than careless consumption and waste: This ranges from trivial things such as not trading in the car annually, when possible, renouncing gratuitously wasteful household practices, through to big things such as giving serious thought to family size. Avoiding non-returnable bottles and wastefully-packaged goods when possible.

The widespread contemporary feeling that the individuals is helpless and irrelevant, the feeling of anomie and dissociation from society, is a symptom of the sickness of our times. If everyone who read this evangelical effusion tried to make their own small contribution to the struggle, it would make a difference.

In the long run, the task is to make a revolution in man's habits, changing from a culture and an economy based on growth to a culture and an economy based on conservation and stability.

This task needs You!

- From Science Yearbook 1970, substantially as printed in the Union Recorder, June 1971.

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#### BLUE MOUNTAINS ENVIRONMENT PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION.

The quarterly meeting held at Lawson on the 6<sup>th</sup> March was well attended and an enthusiastic one in spite of shocking weather. Space does not permit a detailed report, but it is obvious that the association is getting results from its approaches to various bodies, and that it will play a major role in the struggle to retain the present character of the mountains.

It is especially pleasing to note the member's concern for native trees, and surely anyone who observes the present magnificent flowering of Eucalypts, such as the stately Blue Mountains Ash (*Eucalyptus Oreades*) must share this concern for their survival.

To join this organisation is to make a positive contribution to the future. Membership is \$1 per year or 50 cents for pensioners. Payable to the treasurer, Alderman Mrs J Crick of Faulconbride, or to the Secretary, Mr Ted Foster of Warrimoo.

Wilson Alcorn.

#### FROM A BIRDWATCHER'S NOTE BOOK

##### Honey Parrots

Early in December there was a profuse flowering of the Sydney Peppermint Gum (*Eucalyptus Piperita*). Several small flocks of Little Lorikeets were observed feeding on the nectar from the blossom.

These cheerful honey parrots fly at high speed from place to place, calling constantly "Gizz, gizz" and travel long distances in search of flowering trees. Bright green with red faces, they are not much larger than a Budgerigar, but plumper and with a short tail.

Despite their bright colours, when a flock flies into a gum tree they disappear among the leaves and are very hard to observe. We are fortunate in having a splendid view of a pair feeding in a small flowering Mallee. They are not common in the Upper Mountains.



### Unusual Cockatoos.

At Sublime Point, on Feb 6<sup>th</sup> we heard a soft wheezing call – the Glossy Black Cockatoo. Three of them were sitting on a bare branch, preening. One called constantly, a thin begging call – apparently this year's youngster.

A lot smaller than the familiar Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, the male bird is brownish-black, like an oversized dark brown Gang-Gang. He has a broad bright red tail band. The female has a yellow markings on head and neck, tail band orange yellow barred with black.

Although seldom seen in these parts, when found they are very tame and easy to observe. They are never far from the Forest Oaks (Casuarinas), feeding on the seed. Over the past year we have seen a pair 3 or 4 times, always where the trees grow – half way down the Giant Staircase, and at Burralloo lookout on the Prince Henry Cliff Walk.

### A Beautiful Flycatcher.

On our outing to Lithgow Zig Zag on Feb 5<sup>th</sup> we were excited to see the Satin Flycatcher – and not just one, but five. This was our first sighting of this sprightly, beautiful bird, although the late Keith Hindwood "Australian Birds in Colour" writes that it has been reported as the commonest bird in the bush in summer in the Oberon and Lithgow districts.

Then a pair turned up on 28<sup>th</sup> February in Katoomba 'Cascades area and stayed for a few days, catching insects among the tall gums, as is their habit.

The male has shining blue-black plumage on back, head and chest, with pure white underparts. Female slatey-grey above, throat and breast rufous. Both can erect the head feathers into a semi-crest. They are slim active birds and constantly quiver the tail up and down.

Like its near relative, the Leaden Flycatcher, the Satin Flycatcher migrates north in Autumn and returns in Spring. We have several observations of Leaden Flycatchers passing through but until now the Satin has evaded us. The Leaden is a similar bird but lead-grey on the back.

Graham Alcorn.