

KATOOMBA & DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY.

NEWSLETTER No.11. DECEMBER 1972

Price 10¢

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

"Recreational development is a job not of building roads into lovely country, but of building receptivity into the still unlovely human mind!"

— Aldo Leopold.



OUR SOCIETY

Bank of N.S.W. - Daily Telegraph Earth Day Competition.
Our Nature Trail did win that \$65 prize in the regional section after all, and went on to win third prize (200\$) in the adult section of the State finals. Most of you will have seen the photograph in the Advertiser, of Beryl Cooley receiving the cheque on the Society's behalf.

A Tree Preservation Order is now in force in the Blue Mountains area. Briefly if any tree is over 12feet in height, or has a girth of over 18inches at 3feet from the ground, or has a branch spread of more than 10feet, you may not cut it down without Council's permission, unless it is dying or dangerous.

Letters of thanks were received from Cec & Rita Sainty, & the Secretary of the Oatley Flora & Fauna Society after the group's visit in October. It was a great pleasure for our Society to have them here.

The Hut: Somany people have remarked how much better the Hut looks with its carpet. Martin & Betty Kaub donated it, and have now generously given a vacuum cleaner too. True conservationists--they said they don't need them any more.

During early October the Hut was bright with colour, thanks to the Conservation-theme posters lent by the Wentworth Falls Grammar School. As a gesture of appreciation the Society is giving an appropriate book to the libraries of each of the schools (Katoomba High & Leura Public included, who also lent posters). Their librarians have been asked to select the book

Working Bees: We have been resting on our laurels somewhat the last few months. However after Christmas and the school holidays, work begins in earnest around the Hut.

Back to the Blue Mountains Week display: The Blue Mts. Regional Tourist Assn. has asked the Society if it would like to put a "Conservation display" in a shop window during the back to the Mountains week next February. Naturally the Society will grasp this opportunity. Ideas and volunteers are welcome.

Our 530a Committee is responsible for the improvements in the Valley of Waters Reserve. Dark stained posts have been erected to stop motorists driving onto the picnic area. These are hefty enough to be noticed, but do not compete with their surrounds for attention. There are also new see-saws, and a bubbler.

Accident Clean-up. The 11,000 cans picked up on 22nd October along the Great Western Highway between Katoomba & Bullaburra by the Katoomba Rotoract Club Members were sent away for re-cycling. Our Society congratulated the group on this public-spirited effort, and sent a small donation.

The Total Environment Centre has become concerned about what is happening to our Blue Mountains. In a letter dated 23rd October, to our Society the Director, Mr Milo Dunphy wrote:- 'At present several bodies including the T.E.C. PROPOSE to represent to the Government the urgent need for the State Planning Authority to set up a 'task force' planning team including ecologists, zoologists, botanists, etc. to look at the Blue Mountains Region. A map T.E.C. has prepared summarising all the various developmental projects on the Mountains seems to spell their destruction within ten years unless urgent action is taken.'

COMING EVENTS

The Christmas Barbecue followed by Carols by Candlelight will be held on 9th December in the Valley of Waters Reserve starting at 6.30 p.m. The Good Neighbour Council choir will join us, and lead the singing. Please bring your own chops and a small plate for supper. There will be no ordinary meeting in December.

January Meeting: In the June 1972 Newsletter there was an article by the Rev. Dr. Eugene D Stockton, who has done an archaeological survey of the Blue Mountains. So much interest was expressed by readers that Dr. Stockton was asked if he could spare the time to address one of our meetings. He has kindly consented to come, and will be guest speaker at the Meeting on the 25th January in the Hut at 8p.m. It would be worth buying your 1973 diary now to note this date.

February Meeting: At this meeting on Thursday, 22nd in the Hut at 8 pm. there will be a public viewing of the best entries received in the Photographic Competition (details elsewhere in this Newsletter). Mr K Musgrave, President of Springwood Camera Club, has consented to come along and comment on the slides.

Morning Meeting: This will be on Monday, 12th February at 10.45 a.m. in the Hut. Our guest speaker will be Mrs. Ruth Overton, Secretary of the Blue Mountains Group of the Society for Growing Australian Plants.

OUTINGS

These have continued regularly over the past months and quite a variety of areas have been visited

September took us in quite another direction to Long Angle gully, north of Warrimoo. This was of special interest to bird-watchers, though the flower enthusiasts also had a good time. Caves & rocks were a fascinating feature.

October; On this outing we were joined by a large party from the Oatley Flora & Fauna Group. We followed the newly completed and prize-winning Nature Trail from the Hut at Valley of Waters, Wentworth Falls to West Street & back to the Hut. From there we visited three lookouts above the Jameson Valley with glorious views & masses of wild-flowers that exhausted our supply of adjectives with their beauty.

Also in October a party of us went to Wirrimbirra Native plant Research Station near Bargo, & had a most interesting and enjoyable day.

November: This trip was through the Megalong Valley, leaving the cars at Medlow Gap & ascending Mt. Mouin. Only a few of the group ventured to the top over a rough, steep hillside, to sign the book there. The lower part of the valley was alive with the songs of a great variety of birds. Some of the flowers seen were of different species from those observed in our other recent outings.

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becue will be held at the Valley of Waters Reserve
December 9th at 6.30 p.m.

January 6th 1973 is the date of the next outing and the
meeting place is to be the Conservation Hut at 9.30 a.m.

Join us if you can.

Nora Dillon.

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Our Society is conducting a photographic competition with the help
of the Springwood Camera Club.

PRIZES: * 1st. \$10

* 2nd. small book

* 3rd. certificate of merit.

1. Entry to be a colour slide.
2. Photograph (may be a view, a tree, flower study etc.)
to be taken anywhere along the Katoomba & District
Wildlife Conservation Society's Nature Trail, or in
the area from the Wentworth Falls to the Valley of
Waters.
3. Closing date - 26th January 1973
4. Entries to be sent to the Hon. Secretary, K&D.W.C.S.,
23 Edward Parade, Wentworth Falls, 2782.
Include name & address & return postage if entry is
to be returned.
5. Judges will be appointed by the Springwood Camera Club.
6. Conditions:-
 - (a) The judges' decision will be final.
 - (b) K&D.W.C.S. reserves the right to copy any slides
for its own purposes.
 - (c) Care will be taken with the slides, but no
responsibility accepted.
7. The judges will be looking for a slide which encour-
ages appreciation of nature as well as being of
artistic merit and quality.

NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL of N.S.W.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This was held on 21st October at North Sydney and the
Society's delegates were our Secretary Miss Winsome Gregory and
President Wilson Alcorn.

In the absence of Mr Vincent Serventy Through sickness
the Vice Chairman, Mr Len Willan, was an efficient and firm chair-
man. He presided over consideration of 66 resolutions from member
bodies, and election of the executive for 1972-3.

The Conference was cheered by the news of rejection of
extensions of limestone-leases at Bungonia and also by the award
of this year's Natural History Medallion to Mr A.A. Strom, honor-
ary Secretary of the N.C.C. and (patron of our Society). /Delegates...

N.C.C. Conference continued.

Delegates from 48 member bodies attended the Conference. Below, in condensed form, are some of the resolutions passed:

Conference Decisions

- (1) Condemning Lands Department subdivision proposals on escarpment & recommending preservation in natural state.
- (3) Calls on Minister for Lands to abandon the present policy of converting leasehold land to freehold.
- (6) N.C.C. to press Federal Government to remove taxation incentives for clearing natural cover.
- (16) N.C.C. to press for adequate funds to be made available by State & Commonwealth Governments for research into effects of bush-fires & controlled burning specifically in National Parks & Nature-reserves
- (18B) Commonwealth to seek powers to declare any animal or plant an endangered species and acquire the species' habitat as a Commonwealth Reserve.

Myall Lakes

- (21) That the N.C.C. commend and support the State Planning Authority's action in assuming control of development in Myall Lakes & Smiths' Lake area and urge the State Government to acquire as much land as possible urgently for addition to the Myall Lakes National Park.
- (26) Requesting Government to expand and improve the system of Wildlife Refuges.
- (43) N.C.C. to request a Federal policy in field of resource conservation.
- (45) N.C.C. to ask State Government to set up a committee on preservation of roadside verges.

ZERO POPULATION

- (46) That the N.C.C. endorse the concept of Zero population.
- (51) That a Royal Commission investigate the works programme of the M.W.S. & D. Board.
- (57) N.C.C. to urge the Federal Government to place heavy export duties on beach minerals & wood chips to restrict destruction of our coastline and forests.

Our resolutions on research into fire & uniformity of State laws on wildlife conservation were endorsed by Conference.

The buffet tea at 6.30.p.m. provided an opportunity to meet the other delegates and the meeting closed with a thought-provoking address by the poet Judith Wright.

Now it is up to the 48 member bodies to back up the N.C.C. Executive in the formidable task of translating these excellent decisions into reality.

OUR SHRUBS ARE OTHER'S WEEDS!

As we in Australia are combating Blackberry, Broom & Briar as competitors of our bush, in South Africa the battle against the menace of alien vegetation is interesting to note also.

The following is extracted from a small booklet compiled & edited by "The Control of Alien Vegetation Committee KIRSTENBOSCH". "What is Alien Vegetation? As all will know, numerous varieties of trees, shrubs, annuals & grasses have come to our shores since Van Riebeeck landed. The early tree planters have their lasting monument today--the trees were wisely chosen in that they provided timber, food, shade and shelter where men wanted them, but did not spread uncontrollably by self-sowing.

"In later years the choice was less fortunate and there were innocent importations of trees which were to turn to ravaging weeds. Australian Wattles & Willows, Spiny Hakea & Cluster Pine--aliens from Australia & Europe--not only thrive in the rainfall areas but multiply & spread at rates greater than in their countries of origin & our own vegetation gives way!....."

Many examples are given here of Rooikrantz & Port Jackson Willow.
/The publication.....

OUR SHRUBS cont.

The publication continues: "The main species of dangerous weeds are:

1. Hakea (acicularis & gibbosa & suaveolens)
2. Albizzia (lophantha)
3. Acacia (cyclops, longifolia, mollissima, dealbata, melanoxydon & cyanophylla)

--Species cyclops is the ROOIKRANTZ; sp. cyanophylla is the Port Jackson WILLOW--

4. Pinus (pinaster or Cluster Pine)
5. Opuntia (several species: cactus mainly in Eastern Province)
6. Rubus (pinnatus: Brambles, --doubtful if indigenous--)
7. Populus (canescens--Grey Poplar--)
8. Caesalpinia (sepiaria)
9. Solanum (auriculatum)
10. Leptospermum (laevigatum--called the MYRTLE--).

"We intend to name this group of trees broadly CANCER TREES", the article concludes.

--Betty Kaub.

FILM EVENING A GREAT SUCCESS

Apart from the Nature Trail the Society's main Earth Day effort was the organising of Vincent Serventy's Film Evening in Katoomba, a splendid success. The gross takings were \$157.30 & this was sent to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia.

A large audience saw the first public showing of the full colour version of the outstanding film on Australian Birds, made under Mr Serventy's direction for the Shell T.V. Series--a real treat!

We were also shown beautiful slides from all over Australia, each one with a message in conservation, showing the advances made and the challenges to be faced.

Our thanks to Vincent Serventy, an outstanding Australian.

SCOUTS CLEAR TRACKS

"We Scouts have helped wear out these tracks over the years, so we feel we should play a part in restoring them" said Geoff Steer, Assistant Commissioner of Cumberland Scout District who organised & directed the Scout's Conservation Weekend on November 25th--26th.

And restore them they certainly did. Up to 60 capable Senior Scouts worked mightily, often in drizzling rain, to clear and restore the walking track from the Hut, down the Shortcut to Shackleton's walk, Breakfast Point, Lady See's Lookout, Denfenella, and right along Undercliff Walk to the top of Wentworth Falls!

They also opened up a track that had been closed, branching off the National Pass track, below the Hut, through a swamp to Lyre Bird Lookout, then up the hill to join the Shortcut, making a pleasant round walk.

The B.M.C.C. supplied tools, materials and rangers Alf Gilham & G. Alcorn to assist. Our Ranger President, Wilson Alcorn worked mightily for the entire weekend as a volunteer.

***** The Hut area was a colourful sight with a village of small tents erected by the Scouts, who camped there Saturday night.

A BIRD IN HAND 'S WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH?-- doesn't this old Proverb Need Restating from the Conservationist point of view?

Have you any suggestions!

R.E.M.D.

MOUNTAIN BIRDS

by Isobel Mackenzie.

When we left the Western Suburbs in search of quietness & clean air, the land we owned on the mountains seemed the place for both. It had certainly suffered from the fires, but was quickly recovering. Though the upper part could show only two trees, one I saved from the builder, the lower part was well covered with young gums all tipped with lovely colour. These are the haunts of birds, and the entertainment they give more than compensates for people.

Our constant visitors are the Currawongs, black & white buccaners, with scouts posted on the highest branch of each tree. They alight on the pergola, perch on the porch rail, and at breakfast time fix beady yelloweyes on one's toast. Throw out fat or bread and a swarm descends, squabbling among themselves for the largest bits, then off down the gully or to another tree. Two crows wait for this and dive upon the flying one. In vain he weaves and turns, the crow is persistent and wins. It is easier to catch in mid air than off the ground. The crow on the ground is full of caution. He approaches with many stops, his long legs well apart, taking off at the slightest sign of trouble, and drawing near the bit with stop and go.

The Grey Currawongs, so elegant in their well-tailored suits of dark grey, pale grey breasts, black masks and black and white tails, are less numerous than the blacks, but are more friendly. They love bread and will sit outside waiting. They are slower than the blacks at grabbing and get quite indignant when their bread is literally taken out of their mouths, as we once saw.

One-eyed Kookaburra

Nelson, the one-eyed Kookaburra, comes always when we are waiting for the butcher. He sits on a bare limb, but will only descend if the blacks are absent. He is quite tame and comes below the window, so we can see his lovely colouring and pattern.... The exquisite turquoise blue patches on his brown wings and the lovely black bars on his tan tail feathers. He has the dearest little feet, not toes spread out like other birds, but neatly placed side by side and covered with tiny feathers. He only appreciates meat and will take a finger with it if one is not quick enough.

There is a Grey Thrush that comes early and hops about the garden without any fear, his large black eyes on the watch for something in the breakfast line. We live in fear of his being taken by one of the cats. At the same time comes a Robin, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by his wife and brown children. He stands out clearly, white topknot, brilliant red waistcoat, jet-black coat and white shirt sleeves. He perches on a garden stake, the fence, a line, sitting motionless, then diving down and off to another spot.

Where in the city could you see nine Black Cockatoos, sitting facing a north-easterly, crests raised and uttering cries like creaking doors. Large birds, quite black with sulphur yellow under tails, they only come before the weather changes. Usually there is a pair about, but this large group appeared before the very wet weather.

Continuous Chatter

The Yellow-Winged Honey-eater comes to the banksia bush we have left on the terrace or to the honey-flowers left in the next block we have just enclosed. Their citron yellow blends perfectly with the bush colour. They chatter continuously as they work among the flowers. Their rivals are the Gill-birds, but only in summer and autumn. They have horrible raucous voices and love the red-hot pokers. We have a row of these outside the northern window, so can watch the antics. The elder Gill-bird arrives with his family. Are they allowed to partake? No. With angry chattering and fluttering wings he drives them off, then circulates around the flowers, rapidly diving his long beak into each bell. He only ceases his spiral supping to drive off the family or go to another flower.

/A Treecreeper.....

A Treecreeper rotates up the tree or, upside down runs under the railing in search of anything hidden in bark or crevices. He moves so rapidly his eyesight must be phenomenal.

A flash of bright scarlet, and two Mountain Parrots fly past. Sometimes they will perch on the saplings, petulantly plucking small sprigs. They have designs on the apples which I have covered with a net....We have not forgotten what happened to our first one-and-only Delicious!

Gregarious Bands

There are always coveys of tiny birds that move in gregarious bands, with a straggler bringing up the rear, Firetail Finches, Gold Finches and other tiny ones. I have started groups of Quail and Ground Pigeons, and sometimes a Spotted Pardalote will move among the gum leaves. He has a most distinctive call, quite loud for such a tiny bird.

It is July, but Spring is in the air; the Grey Currawongs sit on a branch below the terrace. I have been weeding the rose bed, while a continuous love-song has been going on. They sit side by side, the lady with head bent, appreciation in every feather; the male bird stretching his neck at intervals with a little jerk, elevating his beak skywards and uttering rather musical gurglings. You can almost read his language, for there they stay all the morning.

Can Crows be sentimental? Just see them. Side by side on a bare branch, dressing their feathers....Now he strokes her head, & she in turn does the same for him. They stretch wings, touching tips gently.....it's quite a moving sight.

In summer a pair of Kestrels hover over the gully, or clouds of Swifts rise from nowhere, sweep across the sky and vanish whence? Even after the sun goes down a Mopoke calls or a Bat flutters across the sky.

Life is full and strictly for the birds.

SPINEY ANTEATER AGAIN

Lumbering confidently towards us along Undercliff Walk, Wentworth Falls Reserve recently was a large Echidna. Suddenly it stopped, raised its long pointed snout and seemed to sniff the air. Then it bored off at right-angles into the thick ferns beside the swampy track.

A lady reported seeing a small one recently at Woodford. Our last issue reported one at Echo Point. Apparently they are fairly common in the Upper Mountains.

PIGMY POSSUM

Lying in the sand under a rock ledge in the Valley of Waters, we found a small, mouse-like creature. To our astonishment it was a young Pigmy Possum! It revived briefly in our pocket, sipped two drops of honey-water, but expired shortly afterwards.

Two inches long, with a two & a half inch prehensile tail, soft grey fur and prominent whiskers, the little creature had a tiny pouch only noticeable through an eye-glass. Despite this bush tragedy, it is good to know that Pigmy Possums are breeding in our area.

Echidna, a genus of Australian Toothless, spiny, egg-laying, (burrowing) monotremes.

Greek, echidna, a viper.

Editor: Graham Alcorn, P.O. Box 39, Blackheath. N.S.W.

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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Betty Kaub

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FILM EVENING A GREAT SUCCESS

Apart from the Nature Trail the Society's main Earth Day effort was the organising of Vincent Serventy's Film Evening in Katoomba, a splendid success. The gross takings were \$157.30 and this was sent to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia.

A large audience saw the first public showing of the full colour version of the outstanding film on Australian Birds, made under Mr Serventy's direction for the Shell TV Series – a real treat!

We were also shown beautiful slides from all over Australia, each one with a message in conservation,, showing the advances made and the challenges to be faced.

Our thanks to Vincent Serventy, an outstanding Australian.

SCOUTS CLEAR TRACKS

"We Scouts have helped wear out these tracks over the years, so we feel we should play a part in restoring them" said Geoff Steer, Assistant Commissioner of Cumberland Scout District who organised and directed the Scout's Conservation Weekend on November 25th-26th.

And restore them they certainly did. Up to 60 capable Senior Scouts worked mightily, often in drizzling rain, to clear and restore the walking track from the Hut, down the Shortcut to Shackleton's walk, Breakfast Point, Lady See's Lookout, Denfenella, and right along Undercliff Walk to the top of Wentworth Falls!

They also opened up a track that had been closed, branching off the National Pass Track, below the Hut, through a swamp to Lyre Bird Lookout, then up the hill to join the Shortcut, making a pleasant round walk.

The B.M.C.C. supplied tools, materials and rangers Alf Gilham and Graham Alcorn to assist. Our Ranger President, Wilson Alcorn worked mightily for the entire weekend as a volunteer.

The Hut area was a colourful sight with a village of small tents erected by the Scouts, who camped there Saturday night.

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A BIRD IN HAND'S WORTH YWO IN THE BUSH? – doesn't this old Proverb Need Restating from the Conservation point of view?

Have you any suggestions!

R.E.M.D.

MOUNTAIN BIRDS by Isobel Mackenzie.

When we left the Western Suburbs in search of quietness and clean air, the land we owned on the mountains seemed the place for both. It had certainly suffered from the fires, but was quickly recovering. Though the upper part could show only two trees, one I saved from the builder, the lower part was well covered with young gums all tipped with lovely colour. These are the haunts of birds and the entertainment they gave more than compensates for people.

Our constant visitors are the Currawongs, black and white buccaneers , with scouts posted on the highest branch of each tree. They alight in the pergola, perch in the porch rail, and at breakfast time fix beady yellow eyes on one's toast. Throw out fat or bread and a swarm descends, squabbling among themselves for the largest bits, then off down the gully or to another tree.

Two crows wait for this and dive upon the flying one. In vain he weaves and turns, the crow is persistent and wins. It is easier to catch in mid-air than off the ground. The crow on the ground is full of caution. He approaches with many stops, his long legs well apart, taking off at the slightest sign of trouble, and drawing near the bit with stop and go.

The Grey Currawongs, so elegant in their well-tailored suits of dark grey, pale grey breasts, black masks and black and white tails, are less numerous than the blacks, but are more friendly. They love bread and will sit outside waiting. They are slower than the blacks at grabbing and get quite indignant when their bread is literally taken out of their mouths, as we once saw.

One-eyed Kookaburra

Nelson, the one-eyed Kookaburra, comes always when we are waiting for the butcher. He sits on a bare limb, but will only descend if the blacks are absent. He is quite tame and comes below the window, so we can see his lovely colouring and pattern. The exquisite turquoise blue patches on his brown wings and the lovely black bars on his tan tail feathers. He has the dearest little feet, not toes spread out like other birds, but neatly placed side by side and covered with tiny feathers. He only appreciates meat and will take a finger with it if one is not quick enough.

There is a Grey Thrush that comes early and hops about the garden without any fear, his large black eyes on the watch for something in the breakfast line. We live in fear of his being taken by one of the cats. At the same time, comes a Robin, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by his wife and brown children. He stands out clearly, white topknot, brilliant red waistcoat, jet black coat and white short sleeves. He perches on a garden stake, the fence, a line, sitting motionless, then diving down and off to another spot.

Where in the city could you see nine Black Cockatoos, sitting facing a north-easterly, crests raised and uttering cries like creaking doors. Large birds, quite black with sulphur yellow under tails, they only come before the weather changes. Usually there is a pair about, but this large group appeared before the very wet weather.

Continuous Chatter

The Yellow-Winged Honey-eater comes to the banksia bush we have left on the terrace or to the honey-flowers left in the next block we have just enclosed. Their citron yellow blends perfectly with the bush colour. They chatter continuously as they work among the flowers. Their rivals are the Gill-birds, but only in summer and autumn. They have horrible raucous voices and love the red-hot pokers. We have a row of these outside the northern window, so we can watch the antics. The elder Gill-bird arrives with his family. Are they allowed to partake? No. With angry chattering and fluttering wings he drives them off, then circulates around the flowers, rapidly diving his long beak into each bell. He only ceases his spiral supping to drive off the family or go to another flower.

A Treecreeper

A treecreeper rotates up the tree or, upside down runs under the railing in search of anything hidden in bark or crevices. He moves so rapidly his eyesight must be phenomenal.

A flash of bright scarlet and two Mountain Parrots fly past. Sometimes they will perch on the saplings, petulantly plucking small sprigs. They have designs on the apples which I have covered with a net. We have not forgotten what happened to our first one and only Delicious!

Gregarious Bands

There are always coveys of tiny birds that move in gregarious bands, with a straggler bringing up the rear, Firetail Finches, Gold Finches and other tiny ones. I have started groups of Quail and Ground Pigeons, and sometimes a Spotted Pardalote will move among the gum leaves. He has a most distinctive call, quite loud for such a tiny bird.

It is July, but Spring is in the air, the Grey Currawongs sit on a branch below the terrace. I have been weeding the rose bed, while a continuous love song has been going on. They sit side by side, the lady with head bent, appreciation in every feather; the male bird stretching his neck at intervals with a little jerk, elevating his beak skywards and uttering rather musical gurglings. You can almost read his language, for there they stay all the morning.

Can Crows be sentimental? Just see them. Side by side on a bare branch, dressing their feathers. Now he strokes her head, and she in turn does the same for him. They stretch wings, touching tips gently...it's quite a moving sight.

In Summer a pair of Kestrels hover over the gully, or clouds of Swifts rise from nowhere, sweep across the sky and vanish whence? Even after the sun goes down a Mopoke calls or a Bat flutters across the sky.

Life is full and strictly for the birds.

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SPINEY ANTEATER AGAIN

Lumbering confidently towards us along Undercliff Walk Wentworth Falls Reserve recently was a large Echidna. Suddenly it stopped, raised its long pointed snout and seemed to sniff the air. Then it bored off at tight-angles into the thick ferns beside the swampy track.

A lady reported seeing a small one recently at Woodford. Our last issue reported one at Echo Point. Apparently they are fairly common in the Upper Mountains.

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PIGMY POSSUM

Lying in the sand under a rock ledge in the Valley of Waters, we found a small. Mouse-like creature. To our astonishment it was a young Pigmy Possum! It revived briefly in our pocket, sipped two drops of honey-water, but expired shortly afterwards.

Two inches long, with a two and a half inch prehensile tail, soft grey fur and prominent whiskers, the little creature had a tiny pouch only noticeable through an eye-glass. Despite this bush tragedy, it is good to know that Pigmy Possums are breeding in our area.

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Echidna, a genus of Australian Toothless, spiny, egg-laying (burrowing) monotremes.

Greek, echidna, a viper.

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