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KALORI

July '69

Conservation Society



Lower Blue Mountains

Wildlife

CONSERVE, PRESERVE, INVESTIGATE, EDUCATE

Kalori is published monthly by and for the members of the Lower Blue Mountains Wildlife Conservation Society.

The aims of the Society are, briefly, to:-

1. Educate the members and the community to the cultural values of nature.
2. Work for the reservation of areas of natural environment for the refuge and breeding of indigenous flora and fauna.
3. Carry out research into the distribution, population and species of flora and fauna in the Blue Mountains.

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Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month in the Springwood Fire Station, commencing 8.00 p.m.

Bulletin No. 27
July, 1969.

FAUNA SURVEY - Thanks to K. King the fauna survey is moving along. On the 16th. June four of us Toyota-ed along the College Trail checking caves and other likely spots for evidence of animals. Some were found and three areas were tentatively selected for sampling. They are 1. a westerly gully head, 2. an east facing cliffy point, and 3. a strip from 2. down to Blue Gum Swamp Creek; all about a mile north of St. Columba's College.

FLORA SURVEY - We also laid out three more quadrats in the same locality, traversing an area of what, before the fire, was a patch of boronia. The count showed 18 different species and 116 specimens. Twenty of these were flannel flower seedlings, 20 were Pomax, and 27 were an unknown herb. If they all live, the world will be 14.3 feet deep in flannel flowers by 1973.

EMBLEM - By vote, it was decided to adopt the sugar glider and faulconbridge mallee as Society emblems. It is hoped to incorporate a suitable design in a letterhead.

TIGER CAT - You may have read recently that a tiger cat was caught at Faulconbridge and presented to the Zoo. Rember, if you become guardian to a protected animal, don't offer it to Taronga Park - phone the National Parks Service and ask them what to do.

NEXT MEETING - 10th. July.

G. Croghan.
Hon. Sec.

AFTER THE SMOKE HAS CLEARED: A LOOK BACK.

By Michael Kartzoff, Executive Officer,
Outer Sydney Bushfire Protection Organisation.

Although the report deals with the County of Cumberland (Sydney) area, the conclusions reached by Mr. Kartzoff are felt worth reporting.

"After the fires, what has been learned? Five conclusions emerge:

(1) Co-ordinated, planned hazard reduction is vital. Although some burning off had been done, its scale - and location - was inadequate. The fact that fires travelled over country burnt only four or three years previously (in two or three cases, only two years previously) shows that long-range planning is essential. Fire trails become unusable when an accumulation of fuel builds up along their alignment and they become a real danger to fire fighters who have to use them.

Obviously, any such plan must be prepared jointly by the authorities responsible for the bushland, parks, reserves, and forests involved, and the plan must be adhered to.

(2) One of the greatest weaknesses revealed was in mopping-up operations. No less than two re-lights followed the fire in the Dalrymple-Hay State Forest, and a small fire at French's Forest, extinguished on the Thursday, flared up again on Saturday because two dead hollow trees had remained alight. The point is made that although volunteers in the bush fire brigades can take time off from work to fight fires, seldom can they afford to take time off for mopping-up and patrol.

(3) Centralized fire reporting, as already practised in the Southern Zone, is highly desirable throughout the area. There was no central awareness of the serious fires burning in the last week of November, when the appointment of an emergency controller under section 17 of the Bush Fires Act would have been justified before the extreme conditions of the 28th.

(4) The very small amount of property destroyed in Sydney, as compared to the severe losses in the Blue Mountains and the Bulli area, shows that fire awareness by householders and efficiency by firefighters can eliminate property damage.

(5) The usefulness of fire trails has been again demonstrated. Whilst some trails could not be used because of the speed or the fierceness of the fire, in nearly all cases trails were used either as a base for back-burn, as an axis for fire fighting, or as a means of access. The necessity of providing both perimeter trails, between bushland and settlement, and access trails, especially for purposes of hazard reduction patrol, initial attack and mopping up has been clearly demonstrated.

It has been also found that ridge top trails were undesirable because

personnel using them were blinded by smoke. It is now desirable to build trails wherever practicable along the eastern slope of ridges below the summit, from which fire-fighters could operate in relatively safety, and from which back burning up to the ridge top would be possible. Fire trails should also be wider than the usual 9 to 12ft. standard previously adopted.

The area over which fires have raged around the Sydney Metropolitan area in the period September-December, 1968, has not been fully assessed, but a rough estimate is between 120,000 and 150,000 acres in all. Three homes were destroyed, in addition to some sheds and three holiday shacks, of which two were unoccupied and are believed to have been abandoned. Three cottages were also destroyed in Emu Plains by fires from the Blue Mountains. In view of the severity of the fires, the small amount of material loss reflects very high credit on the fire fighting services in the outer Sydney area."

Reprinted from "Forest and Timber"

The Continuing Story of the Gould League of Bird Lovers.

On 22nd October, 1910, a small group of bird lovers met under an elm tree at the Wellington Public School in what is now known as the "Golden West" region of N.S.W., and formed the New South Wales Gould League of Bird Lovers. From this little group grew the movement that was destined to become known to nearly every schoolchild in Australia.

The League was named after John Gould, a nature lover, who once wrote: "If children learn in school about the story book of nature they will try to be bright like the birds, and their hearts will never grow old".

Starting work as a gardener's boy at Windsor Castle, John Gould became a celebrated ornithologist and an authority of the bird life of most countries of the world. In 1838 John Gould brought his family to Australia and travelled all over Australia taking notes for a book "The Birds of Australia".

Today, the Wellington Public School proudly carries a 100 per cent membership of the League, and the elm tree, which has sheltered thousands of schoolchildren at the school, has become a symbol of the continuing spread of the work of the League. A bronze tablet affixed to the trunk of the elm records the League's founding.

Reprinted from "Forest and Timber"

STONY RANGE

On the eastern side of Pitt Water Road, Dee Why, Stony Range Flora and Fauna Reserve was originally set aside as a recreation area. Like all non-supervised spots of native beauty, it had been raided for fire-wood and flowers till almost denuded of the wealth of trees and flowers which had originally grown there, and had become partly a rubbish dump. In 1936 a devastating fire had swept through and caused complete alteration of ecology. Casuarina and Kunzea took control, and only one very small patch of colourful natives were in evidence when in middle 1950's it was taken over for re-planting.

At this time, Warringah Flora and Fauna Society became interested. By negotiation with local Council and Lands Department it was re-dedicated as flora and fauna reserve.

By voluntary labour all debris was removed, and full development to date has been carried out by voluntary labour. Interested people building homes in the district gave plants from their land. Also some plants were taken from areas of road and street formation. Further species were procured from the Water Board where they would have been submerged by rising dams. A lot of lovely rock lilies have come from the Warragamba Dam site. The Forestry Commission has allowed collection of ferns and rock and tree orchids where they would have been destroyed by the industry of forestry.

To raise funds for fencing, erection of a building, and recently a glasshouse for plant propagation, public functions were organised, subscriptions solicited and some help was gained from Council and Lands Department. A women's auxiliary was formed and aided the fund raising efforts. Members of this auxiliary prepare teas in the building to serve to voluntary workers (who still do all the planting and nursery work) and to visitors to the "Range".

The building also serves as regular meeting-place for the Warringah Flora and Fauna Society. Visitors are asked to give donation of a coin.

Stony Range was originally seven and a half acres in extent, but has recently been enlarged to eight acres. It is typical Hawkesbury sand-stone land, in a protected shallow valley, with aspect approximately a north-north-east slope guarded from strong south and west winds. A small creek runs through the reserve. "Rock-scaping" has been done in parts; and from the pathways and rocky outlooks a bright profusion of flowers delights the eye in flowering season.

Many and varied boronias, eriostemon (including autumn flowering variety), grevillias, purple and white prostantheras, flannel flowers and waratahs can be seen amongst the larger Christmas bush, banksias, wattles and lilly pilly. Of the greatest delights of the scene are masses of rock lilies which cover large boulders and faces of miniature cliffs. Along with the programme of re-establishing local native plants, several varieties from other states have also been introduced.

The propagation of native plants is a specialty of "The Range". All planting and tending is done by devoted volunteers. In earlier years this was all done in open nursery area. Now a glasshouse has been built, which will soon be furnished with light, heat and automatic mist. Whilst the sale of plants has, to date, considerably aided finance, the future here is brightening.

Another development now being carried out is the excavation of site for a pool. This will be approximately 40 x 15 feet in extent, two feet deep and kidney-shaped. Six inches of earth and sand on the floor will provide root food for water lilies and aquatic plants. The containing brick wall will be hidden by water and plants. Large rocks will surround the upper edge and ferns amongst them overhang and decorate the surroundings. This pool will also provide permanent water for birds and the small animals which hide amongst the rocks and vegetation. Earth-dwelling fauna are mostly lizards - and mostly shy. Occasionally an echidna may be seen.

The reserve is, of course, a wonderful attraction to bird life and the air alive with their varied calls and songs.

Stony Range is now open to visitors seven days per week, all year round. A Council gardener is in attendance on working days. Voluntary staff attend at week-ends and on holidays.

Most interesting time for visiting is, naturally, our late-winter and spring flowering period and when the summer Christmas bush and bells are in bloom. However, there is always something of beauty and interest to make a visit worth-while. For anyone whose interest is in propagation it is absorbing.

The land in this reserve remains the property of the Department of Lands; Local Council are trustees. It is administered by a Committee of Management of seven members, elected for three-year terms, who organise all work, supervision of visitors, plantings and sales of plants.

Ground Fuel is the Danger.

Extract from "Forest and Timber"

Bushfire experts are now convinced controlled burning-off of undergrowth and ground fuel is the only successful means of protecting Australia from recurring major bushfires.

All agree that firebreaks are helpful but say they are almost useless in stopping big fires.

"Of all the factors that affect fire behaviour", says Mr. McArthur, Officer-in-charge of protection research in the Forest Research Institute at Canberra, "the most important is the amount of fuel on the ground. This is the only variable man can control."

"Once the ground fuel is reduced fires which start could probably be controlled with half a dozen men."

Mr. McArthur added: "If the fuel had been reduced in the gullies of the Blue Mountains there would have been far less homes destroyed in the recent fires."

SPRINGWOOD BUSHWALKING CLUB

WALKS PROGRAMME

July

12/13th NEWNES Glowworm tunnel, - Glen Davis

Meet Friday night 8 p.m. Civic Centre cars (Easy)
P. Foster (511554) work.

26/27th ZOBLE CRAVAS Mt. King George, Mt. Caley, Zoble Cravas, Grose R;
Carmathon Junction Tomar Creek Mt. Tomar (Hard)

Meet Friday 8 p.m. Civic Centre Cars.
Ken Iggeldon (512527)

August

2/3/4th SKI TOURING Details later
Tony Foster (512527)

9/10th MT. KELLY Details later
Adrian Stanborough per Moya Hibbard (511235)

23/24th COX RIVER Bridge Lothar, Cox River, Chaolow Creek, Hargraves
Lookout Blackheath.
Meet Friday 8 p.m. Civic Centre (Medium)
P. Foster (511554) work.

30/31st BARREN GROUND Robertson, Carrington Falls, Dhruwalgha Mt; The
Barren Ground, Saddle Back Mt.; Kiama (Medium)
2 cars or 1.10 a.m. train from Central.
Bob Taylor (6230151 ext. 60 work)

September

6/7th CHURCH CREEK CAVES Kanangra Walls, Bullhead Range, Camage Spires
Kowmung River, Church Creek Caves, Uni Rover Trail, Kanangra Road (Hard)
Meet 8 p.m. Civic Centre Friday Cars.
Roy Kaltenbacher (511196)

13/14th CANOE PRACTICE Higher McDonald via McDonald R. to Wisemans Ferry (Easy)
Limited numbers Bob Taylor (623 0151 ext 60 work)

20/21st CLOUDMAKER Cox River Rigby's Rock Gangerang, Cloudmaker, Dox Creek,
Morilla Deck, Strongleg Buttress, Howling Dog, Med Gap (Hard)
Meet Friday 8 p.m. Civic Centre Cars.
P. Foster (511554 work).

October

4/5/6th BARRINGTON TOPS Details later
Allen Barry (512527).

4/5/6th WATSONS CRAGS Details later
Adrian Stanborough per Moya Hibbard (511235)

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the Treasurer,
Mrs. D. Dark,
"Nimaloola",
Russell Ave.,
Valley Heights, 2777.

Enclosed please find the sum of \$ to cover one years membership*

Name in full.....

Address in full.....

Occupation.....

* Individuals \$2.00 annually or \$20.00 Life.
Associates \$1.00 annually - Subscription to Kalori
Junior 30 cents annually
Family \$3.00 annually.