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# KALORI

Dec. '69

Society

Conservation

Wildlife



Lower Blue Mountains



NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1969.

In a very busy afternoon session 34 motions were dealt with of which 31 were carried, one lost and two withdrawn.

Most of the discussion on the motions carried concerned only minor or technical changes, the meeting generally agreeing in principal with the main points.

The motion lost, No. 69/33, from Manly-Warringah Flora and Fauna Protection Society -

"That the Council give earnest consideration to ways and means of overcoming present fragmentation which exists in the Conservation Movement at all levels."

After some discussion it was agreed that "fragmentation" as such does not apply to the conservation movement. Although it would appear that there are very many individual societies, whose single voices could perhaps be lost in the wilderness, in fact through the N.S.W. Nature Conservation Council, all societies can speak as one.

It was also felt that this matter was better covered in Motion No. 69/28 (also from Manly-Warringah) -

"That the Council encourage the establishment of Conservation Societies with a locality basis and that such Societies be encouraged to form district or area Councils where common policies can be formulated on district or area conservation problems."

The affiliation of Blue Mountains Societies was pointed out by Miss Bowden as a working example of this idea.

The main discussion and controversy of the day concerned two motions Nos. 69/6 and 69/13. 69/6 states -

"This Conference is opposed to the prescription of a fee for entrance to Nature Reserves in N.S.W."

It was pointed out that the charging of entrance fees could lead to a situation completely at variance with the true purpose of Nature Reserves namely ".....to ensure the retention of samples of the natural environments in the State. As they are to provide a permanent home for the many living things that would be destroyed by our civilization, entry to the Nature Reserves is primarily for those wishing to study the natural communities and learn of the relationships between soil, plants, animals and climate."

The views of the Council on this issue were further expressed by the passing of Motion 69/7 -

"That bona fide study groups be admitted free of entry charge to all National and State Parks, Nature Reserves and Historic Sites, on application in writing to the appropriate authority. This motion to be directed to the Minister for Lands, N.S.W."

The main feature of Motion 69/13 which was in three parts dealing with industrial water pollution, was the amount of discussion on this vital and urgent subject. The original motion, from Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society, was subject to considerable argument and subsequent amendment, and I wasn't fast enough with the pen to take it down. The important point is that the Executive of the N.C.C. will be making representations to the State Government to have the provisions of this motion



included in the proposed legislation for the control of water pollution. This is a very brief summary of the main proceedings only; the minutes will be sent out to member bodies as soon as possible and we hope to forward copies to all members.

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Bulletin No 29  
December 1969

Last month was the Annual General Meeting. We were two short of a quorum and were therefore unable to elect officers; those elected last year are carrying on.

In order to give the Society a definite continuing concrete task we have decided to make an ecological survey of a part of Blue Gum Creek. The first requirement is to compile a comprehensive list of all flora and fauna observed in the area. As the Creek basin is scheduled for intensive development by the Park Trust we will be able to observe the effects of Homo sapiens on the other wildlife and -- see "The Survey" in this issue -- maybe find out how to preserve the habitat while permitting recreational use by large numbers of people.

The third Sunday of each month is set aside as the regular survey day. We meet at 8.00AM at the end of White Cross Road. Checklists and maps are being prepared - if you wish to take part, remember that there are 600 acres to explore and the more helpers there are the easier it will be. Put your bushland strolling to good purpose!

A meeting of the Blue Mountains Natural Resources Federation has been called for Friday 12th. December to discuss, among other matters of mutual interest, the proposed Tree Preservation Order planned by the City Council.

Next meeting 11th December.

G. Croghan  
Hon. Sec.



### A Black and Blue Summer Visitor.

Several queries came in during August from the Springwood and Valley Heights areas concerning a rather well groomed blue-grey bird with black head and tail. They have been observed in pairs flying low over gardens or perched on fences, telephone wires etc.

From the descriptions given, this is almost certainly the Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, also called Blue Jay. Larger in size than a Peewee but smaller than a Magpie, they are very sleek, rather long and slender birds, and the appearance of grooming is heightened by their curious habit of refolding their wings after alighting.

This species appears to be nomadic, at least in this part of its range, and apparently moves north during the colder months. They usually make their re-appearance about September; this year they may have been slightly earlier than usual due to the mild winter. They are almost always seen in pairs, rarely single. I have not seen a group or flock of these birds in this area, though further north they sometimes congregate in loose groups of a dozen or so.

Their main diet appears to be insects, though they also eat native fruits and berries. They apparently cause little damage to cultivated fruit, as I have not heard them mentioned on the "black-list" by fruit-growers.

Their breeding season, according to Cayley, is from August to January in N.S.W., however I would not expect breeding in this area before September and possibly not until October. The usual clutch is three eggs, which are usually olive-green, though sometimes of a more olive-brown shade, spotted in darker shades of umber and chestnut-brown, with underlying spots of grey. The open, flat nest is a marvel of camouflage. Built in the horizontal fork of a fairly thick limb, it is so low in profile that when viewed from the side it is practically indistinguishable from the limb itself, and seen from underneath simply looks like a thickening of the fork.

A typical nest that I was able to examine closely was built in the fork of the bare limb of a River Oak. Composed of fine twigs, bark fibre, Casuarina "leaves" and fibrous roots, it was lined with fine grass stems and bark fibre. The outside was bound together with spiderweb, which was also used to attach pieces of bark and lichen. This material, obtained from the host tree, acted as a perfect camouflage, for the nest was difficult to locate even when its whereabouts were known.

The egg of the Koel - a cuckoo - has been seen in the nest of this species.

At the time of writing this article (October), a pair of these birds commenced building operations in a Peppermint tree in my garden. The birds were first noticed with building material on 24th October, but nest-building appeared rather spasmodic or half-hearted. Whether this was because the birds were young and inexperienced or because the chosen site was too close to human habitation - they were rather shy and wary of approach - I am unable to say. In any case the project was doomed to failure, as the semi-



completed nest was blown down by a storm on 5th. Nov. To date (10 Nov.) no attempt at rebuilding has been made. An examination of the nest material recovered from beneath the tree showed that the collapse of the nest could have been due to the birds placing their trust in man-made materials, for the bulk of it consisted of pieces of fine mesh organdie, which had been long exposed to weather and was very fragile. Perhaps if the birds had stuck to the good old-fashioned way this story may have had a happier ending.

----- Keith King.

#### NOTICE OF MOTIONS FOR FEDERATION MEETING

0. To discuss the application of a Tree Preservation Order in the Town Plan for the City of Blue Mountains.
1. To show support for the Myall Lakes National Park by seeking to have the Sim Committee Report debated in Parliament.
2. To re-affirm support for the Colong Committee by -  
a/ writing to Messrs. Dunbier, Fife, Lewis and A.P.C.M., and  
b/ writing to Blue Mountains City Council in an attempt to persuade them to move against the use of A.P.C.M. cement.
3. To write to the Minister for Conservation seeking information on chipmilling leases on the south coast of N.S.W.
4. To write to the Director, N.P.&W.S., opposing moves to mine under Royal National Park, and especially opposing the construction of buildings connected with mine ventilation shafts.
5. To discuss proposed airstrip in arboretum.
6. To write to the Blue Mountains City Council, seeking to have Glenbrook Lagoon gazetted as a wildlife sanctuary.
7. To write to the N.P.&W.S. offering support to attempts to gain extensions to Blue Mountains National Park.



## THE SURVEY.

Because this is an ecological survey and because this is a conservation society I believe the work we do and the facts we uncover should be constantly funnelled towards the end-point of conservation. In plain words how are we (the community) going to preserve our ecosystem in a desirable state, for ourselves and posterity?

Ecology being the relations between organisms and their environment, we must, as soon as we can in the Blue Gum Swamp, try to understand the niche and role of each species we record - to understand the inter-relationships which constitute the ecosystem.

To understand, to some degree, the ecology of a small part of the Blue Mountains, must help us to understand the whole - how it should be managed to retain the desired values.

Further, I wouldn't be surprised if a faithful ecological study of such a natural ecosystem helped us to see how we are going to stop polluting our own habitat.

- Don Perrin.

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.