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KALORI

May '70

Society
Conservation



Clambertia formosa
(Mountain devil)

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 in the Civic Centre, Springwood, on the second Friday of each month, commencing 8.00 PM.

Last month Mrs. Vellenga gave us a very interesting talk about her avocation, the study of bowerbirds. Among other things, she said that since 1965 she and her husband had banded 750 different birds. She has found several nests near her home and a 'nursery area' where young birds are taken to be taught the mechanics of successful bird-type living. She has not studied the birds long enough yet to be able to estimate whether there has been an increase or decrease in population, but it seems that the species is adaptable to human settlement pressures, and consequently is not, at least, becoming uncommon.

Next month Mr. Ormsby of Linden will speak about snakes. Not perhaps as lovable as bower-birds, but in their own serpentine way, just as interesting.

Mrs. Paish, helped by her husband, has designed a landscape plan for the Springwood Primary School Natural Area. Cunningly, because it is to be built in stages, so that volunteers to help her will not be asked to do too much at one time.

Next meeting:- 8th. May. Dont forget.

G.Croghan
Secretary

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THE SURVEY

Thanks to a rattling good working bee on Sunday April 12th. the bulk of the work of trap-making was completed.

The morning of the Society outing on Sunday 19th. was spent in sighting the trap line. A feature of this outing was the occurrence of a small group of Fantailed cuckoos in the area bounded by the trap-line, Blue Gum Creek, Macrozamia Creek and the road. There were probably three or four pairs in this area, and they called insistently in their plaintive tone until disturbed by the noise of the vehicles.

Twentyfour traps were placed in position on Saturday 25th. and left in the fully opened position, the idea being to accustom the animals to the traps. It is planned to have 32 traps on the line by Saturday 2nd. May, and to carry out the first trapping on this weekend.

K.King

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PESTS FOLLOW THE CHEMICALS IN THE COCOA OF MALAYSIA

by Gordon R. Conway.

(Slightly abridged from "Natural History" Vol 78 No.2, Feb., 1969)

After the second world war the new synthetic insecticides - DDT, BHC, dieldrin, endrin, Malathion, and others - became universally available. The benefits these pesticides have brought have been considerable. BHC, DDT and dieldrin have been particularly effective against rice pests; in Sabah, dieldrin has provided a cheap and extremely effective means of combating the locust outbreaks that had previously been so serious; and DDT and dieldrin have been the main instruments of the successful malaria-control programme. However, my experiences, and those of other entomologists in Malaysia, suggest that the increasing reliance on these pesticides has not been wholly beneficial. Used without regard to the ecological factors of the situation, they may aggravate existing pest problems or create new ones, and they can produce unwanted and far-reaching side effects.

Take cocoa pests in Sabah, for example. Cocoa is a new crop in Sabah, the first commercial plantings being made in 1956. Ten years later there were some 6000 acres under cultivation, mostly at Quoin Hill and Tiger, where there are large areas of volcanic soils. In 1958 a research station was set up at Quoin Hill by the Department of Agriculture, and as entomologist in the Department from 1961 to 1966, I was concerned with cocoa pest problems.

The soils that were chosen for cocoa planting naturally supported rich stands of primary dipterocarp forest. In the areas to be planted, the forest species yielding commercial timber were first felled and extracted. Some second-story trees and regenerating dominants were left to shade the cocoa, and the remainder were either felled or partially cut and left to decompose. As the cocoa acreage has grown, the primary forest has been pushed back, although the cocoa remains essentially an island within it. Much of the cocoa is thus physically close to primary forest and, in some parts - at the forest edge, along roads, and where there are uncultivated clearings - it also borders on uncontrolled secondary scrub or forest.

The first serious insect pests at the Cocoa Research Station were borers - a ring bark borer, which is the larva of a hepialid moth, and two branch borers, the larvae of cossid moths. The former tunnels into the young cocoa tree and feeds on the bark, girdling and often killing the tree. The branch borers tunnel along the upper branches and shoots. Attacked branches usually die above the boring site. Initially neither pest was present in large numbers at the new plantings; but the immediate and extensive damage caused by individual ring bark borer larvae made them serious pests in short order. During the first two years of growth, deaths often amounted to 20% or more per field.

(to be continued)

BLUE MOUNTAINS NATURAL RESOURCES FEDERATION

Minutes of the meeting held on 13th. March, 1970.

Those present were:-

H.L.Paish (Chairman)

G.Croghan (Secretary)

Mr & Mrs G.Overton representing Blue Mtns. Group, S.G.A.P.

D.Perrin " "

B.Riss " "

M.Esson " "

I.Bowden " "

Mr & Mrs Douglas " "

A.Cummings " "

D.Dark " "

K.King " "

M.Smithson " "

Katoomba & Dist. Wildlife Con. Socy.

Lower Blue Mtns. Wildlife Con. Socy.

Minutes of the previous meeting were adopted.

Tree Preservation Order

Chairman: Faulconbridge Advancement League was one Assotiation which recommended a blanket cover, together with - 'on public lands, all trees to be covered by the Order'

Miss Bowden: This refers to all unalienated land?

Chairman: It is difficult to police the order on freehold land; so an example can be set with public land.

Miss Bowden: Our Society did not recommend anything but a blanket Order; specific areas could be decided by Council.

Mr Douglas: This could prevent clear falling by sub-dividers.

Chairman: The Order is designed to prevent this; though there will be a give and take attitude in its application.

Mr Ross : A developer cleared some blocks in Patterson Road, Nth Springwood, leaving selected trees on each block. Buyers of the bñocks have since cleared every tree. I think that the Order should not apply to private land, because householders will remove the trees anyway.

Chairman: A TPO may not save the trees. After the Order is Gazetted it will be necessary for people like us to begin street plantings, education programmes, etc.

Mr King: Education is needed, for instance, to dispel myths as to the relative flammability of different species.

Mr Ross: The Council should take the lead by enforcing the Order over public land.

Chairman: It seems that the idea tonight is to concentrate on public lands. Perhaps we can frame a suggestion to the Council to;-
a/ consider a blanket cover, or
b/ place a complete cover on public land, with
c/ restrictive cover for specific species as per those already suggested.

Moved Mrs.Dark, seconded Miss Bowden that the Federation write to the Council with that suggestion. Carried.

Myall Lakes

The chairman read the letters from the Premier and the Minister for Lands.

Miss Bowden; We should write again to the Premier and the Minister pointing out our dissatisfaction at the incomplete dedication; also to the Myall Lakes Committee asking their opinion of the dedication. Individuals should also write.

Mr Smithson: We should use the heaviest weapons available to us because we are fighting rich powerful Companies.

Mrs Dark referred to the Pitjantjara tribe whose tribal places are to be mined

Chairman: The first task is to dedicate the Park. We don't want all of it as a wilderness area, but without sufficient land then everybody, naturalists and waterskiers alike, will suffer.

Mr Ross : Tourist bodies probably do not realise that their interests are at stake also.

Chairman : Can we suggest that the Myall Lakes Committee write to tourist bodies to enlist their support?

Mr King: Not enough publicity has been given to the fact that if the Park is not expanded, all people will fail to benefit.

Miss Bowden: We should suggest that the Committee publicise their proposed management plan.

Moved Mr King seconded Mr Overton that the Federation write the letters as discussed. Carried.

Chipmills

Chairman outlined the action already taken, and the letter from the Minister for Conservation was discussed.

Moved Mr Douglas seconded Mrs Dark that the Federation write again to the Minister. Carried.

Mining under National Parks

A reply to the Federation's letter had not been received at the date of meeting. The letter also did not express the full sentiment of the Federation, and the Secretary was instructed to follow the matter up.

Glenbrook Lagoon

No reply to the Federation's letter had been received at the date of meeting.

Colong Caves

The letters, especially that from the Blue Mountains City Council, were read and discussed. Secretary was instructed to write to Warringah and Kuringai Councils asking:-

- a/ whether they had stopped using APCM cement, and if so,
- b/ how the Local Government Act restrictions were overcome.

Penrith Industrial Waste

Mr Ross: It has been reported recently that a dump for industrial waste is to be established in or near Penrith. It is likely that pollutants will finish up in the River, and Penrith Council is against the proposal. We could find out what would happen if dumping starts, so that we can support the Council.

Mr King: We must accept the fact that waste must be dumped somewhere, but we should ensure that seepage will be confined.

Mr Overton: That is the dumpers problem. We should object to the proposal in toto.

Chairman: As well as a hole in the ground, the dump should include treatment works.

Mr Ross: We can find out from the Council whether the dumped waste will be treated or raw.

Moved Mr King seconded Mr Ross that the Federation write to Penrith City Council, supporting Council's stand against the dump and suggesting that if the dump is established, the wastes be treated in a manner fitting our technology. A copy of the letter to go to the State Planning Authority. Carried.

General Business

Mrs Dark: The old permanent way at Lapstone - the Lapstone Zig-zag - is to be restored by a private company and used as a rail museum. How will this affect Skarrat Park, with respect to litter, parking, etc.?

Chairman: The Company will have to look after the Park. Council has placed many restrictions on the enterprise.

Mr King: Development of Skarrat Park and the Zig-zag will take some pressure off the natural areas of the Mountains.

Chairman outlined Council's plans for package sewage treatment works on the Mountains. He said that the existing works are not effective in that streams below the outlets are heavily polluted. He said that in some instances it may be too late, but that we could see that existing works are improved, and that we could influence the choice of the type of installation in new treatment works.

Name of the Federation

Mr King: I propose that the name be changed to 'Blue Mountains Conservation Federation'.

Chairman: We shied off the name "conservation" because it had a crackpot connotation.

Mr King: The picture has changed nowadays. Now people are more favourably inclined towards conservation. We do not have to apologise for our beliefs.

Mrs Douglas: The Men of the Land Society are to change their name to the Conservation Society of New South Wales.

Moved Mr King seconded Miss Bowden that the name be changed to Blue Mountains Conservation Federation. Carried.

Meeting closed 10.15 PM.

PALLID CUCKOO

Cuculus pallidis

This cuckoo is a migrant found throughout Australia and Tasmania. It arrives in south-eastern Australia in July or August and departs during February or March; however some birds remain in a district throughout the year.

The pallid cuckoo is the most common of the cuckoos and is probably known best for its song, which is a series of loud persistent notes ascending the scale sometimes varied by a few harsh notes. Its call is often heard at night especially during the summer when its diurnal song ceases.

This bird, particularly common in the area surrounding my home at Penrith, is more often heard than seen as the cuckoo frequents the shady areas of bush or obscure positions on dead trees where its colour affords it most security. When sighted the cuckoo moves in an undulating flight stopping often to regard the observer with curiosity. When alighting it elevates its tail which is a true cuckoo trait.

An obvious reason for its abundance at Penrith is its diet of insects and caterpillars, particularly those covered with bristles. Recently, as usual at this time of the year, the larvae of the cup moth have appeared and the cuckoo arrived punctually to begin feeding. Other insectivorous birds do not feed on these larvae because of the painful bristles. The bird was also abundant during my visit to Walgett as was the cup moth larvae. Because of this habit the pallid cuckoo is a most useful bird.

Being a cuckoo the bird does not build a nest but is a parasite. Its recorded foster-parents number more than eighty species, and these are mainly open-nest species. Often around the house it may be seen being chased by finches and peewees uttering loud squarks. The single egg is flesh pink -- some with spots of a darker hue -- which it lays between September and January.

The cuckoo when hatched is blind, featherless, and to all appearances helpless, but instinct enables it to hoist its nest-mates onto its back, which is provided with a hollow for this purpose, and to climb to the rim of the nest where the helpless nestlings are thrown out. Then the full attention of the foster-parents can be attracted.

Apart from its usefulness in insect destruction the pallid cuckoo, by its breeding habits, achieves a natural balance among birds and becomes a limiting factor in bird populations.

Michael Smithson

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.