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 ENJOY OUR BUSH SONGSTERS
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Newsletter No. 7 December, 1971.

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

"We do not want to be downhearted;
 We are confident that Conservation
 will be coming out on top".

- Martin Kaub.

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OUR SOCIETY: New Members; Meetings; Nature Trail; Journals; Visitors;
 Some Words of Praise; Youth Group.

REPORTS: Blue Mountains Conservation Federation; Annual Conference,
 Nature Conservation Council.

NATURE NOTES: An Unusual Birds Nest; New Plant Genus; Book on Native Herbs;
 The Wog; Emu Wren Breeding Record.

Please send articles and news for next issue to Graham Alcorn, P.O. Box 39,
 Blackheath, 2785, before 28th February, 1972.

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 Mr. A.G. Purcell and Master Peter Purcell, all of Wentworth Falls;
 Mr. George Hoffman of Hazelbrook; Mr. R. Halliday of Hampton; Mrs. Wootton
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Visitors: We will soon be using the handsome new Visitors' Book kindly donated to
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 passing through our doors. This must give great satisfaction to early
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Next outing January 8th, tentatively at Mt. Victoria. Ring me at Wentworth Falls 293 for details. --Nora Dillon.

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Those of us who were privileged to see her beautiful and careful work were indeed fortunate. The water colour paintings are perfect in each minute detail. The publication will be awaited with great interest.

Our very best wishes go with Mrs. Conabere as she continues her journey South. May the right flowers bloom for her!

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So within the last few months we have written to the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital and the Dept. of Child Welfare congratulating them on the retention of Eucalypts in the grounds of the hospital and Clairvaux respectively.

We have also sent letters of appreciation to Comalco Industries Ltd. and Broken Hill Pty Co Ltd. for making it possible for the materials of empty cans to be re-used. Most recently we complimented The Shell Company of Australia Limited on the excellent quality of their film "Amazing Marsupials" shown on Channel 7 on 19th November.

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- 4.. That the N.C.C. protest to the Government over the absence of a representative of the Conservation bodies on the State Pollution Control Commission.
- 5.. That the Government be requested to take action towards the extermination of feral goats and prohibit the proposed commercial herds in Western N.S.W. in view of the enormous damage done by these animals in other parts of the world.
- 6.. That the N.C.C. Executive press for inclusion of the principle of Conservation of mineral resources in the forth-coming Mining Act.
- 7.. That before elections N.C.C. executive secure from all Parties their policies on Conservation and that these policies (or lack of them) be made public.

Our Society's Proposals Passed

The three resolutions put forward by our Society were passed. These were:-

- (a) For retention of Native vegetation on roadside verges.
- (b) For further restriction on fire-arms, and
- (c) For research into effect of 'controlled burning' on flora and fauna, erosion, run-off etc.

In the evening an excellent smorgasbord was followed by an instructive talk and Vincent Serventy's delightful film, Nature Walkabout.

It was a heartening experience to attend this conference and realise that so many people are committed to finding satisfactory solutions to problems of environment and to the preservation of wildlife habitat.

Wilson Alcorn.

PYE YOUTH GROUP

A PYE (Protect Your Environment) Youth Group has been formed on the Mountains for those aged between 12 and 20. If you would like to know more about it, or to join, please get in touch with the President, Michael Smithson, 83 Copeland Street, Penrith. Telephone:- Penrith 23567.

THE WOG, (Emephylus triangularis)

Those members who attended the outing to Springwood in June were intrigued to note the native passion-fruit (*Passiflora herbertiana*) flowering abundantly along the track. Mrs. Conabere who had painted these flowers at Coffs Harbour, had found the fruits very uneven in shape and had suspected this was not natural. Enquiries at the National Herbarium, Sydney, produced the information that the fruits were attacked by a beetle of the weevil group.

Investigation proved this to be the case. Ripe fruit were found and they contained grubs and a fine family of wogs. The most aggressive was removed for the purpose of including a painting in my Nature Notes; however, the sudden view of the outside world was overstimulating. He rushed wildly about never still for one second. It is easy to understand why entomologists stick pins through insects. Finally he ended up with eight legs and a double pair of antennae.

I then put him back in the bottle containing the passion fruit from which he had been removed, the stalk of which was resting across the bottom of the jar. The wog ran rapidly round and round falling over the stalk on every circuit of the jar for twenty minutes. Finally he climbed up the stalk, AH! now, I thought, he will return to his family. But no, he merely crouched at the base of the fruit, and with only half an inch to go to reach the gaping hole in its side, he made no attempt to enter. The odour should have been sufficient guide! There he stayed for a further quarter of an hour, and finally crawled back to the bottom of the jar.

Obviously his home was unrecognisable when viewed from without. The poor chap had spent his entire existence cooped in the green walls of *Passiflora*, but nothing short of pushing him back served to reunite him to his family.

Question: How and when do the weevils get out? When the fruit falls to the ground or when it is still on the vine? Does it wait till the skin breaks or eat its way through? Does it eat at all, or only the grub?

Isobel K. Bowden

EMU-WREN NESTING IN KATOOMBA

The Emu-Wren is one of the most unusual of the world's small birds. It is described as being $7\frac{1}{4}$ " inches long, but four inches of this is tail! Furthermore it has only six tail feathers and these lack barbicels, giving them a skeletal appearance like emu feathers-- hence the name.

Bird watchers were excited to hear that the Southern Emu-Wren was found recently in the Upper Mountains by John Hobbs. About the same time we found the species in Hartley Vale during our outing down Lawsons Long Alley. Subsequently we learnt that Mr. Bert Esgate, a local bird lover, has known for years that this shy, retiring bird inhabits the hanging swamps of Minnie Ha Ha Falls Reserve.

It was here last month that a nest was found containing three young, low down in the cutty grass of the swamp. Small, dome shaped, with a side entrance, the nest was very hard to find.

Arnold McGill in his book "Australian Warblers" says: "Because the Emu-Wren requires undisturbed damp cover to breed and exist, and because so much of this type of habitat close to cities and larger towns has been destroyed, this interesting species, still relatively common, must have suitable reserves to ensure its survival".

Fortunately, both Minnie Ha Ha and the swampy shores of Wentworth Falls Lake - another habitat - are reserves - and will, we hope, remain so!

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

KATOOMBA AND DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONS SOCIETY Price 10 cents

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In the evening an excellent smorgasbord was followed by an instructive talk and Vincent Serventy's delightful film, Nature Walkabout.

It was a heartening experience to attend this conference and realise that so many people are committed to finding satisfactory solutions to problems of environment and to the preservation of wildlife habitat. Wilson Alcorn.

PYE YOUTH GROUP

A PYE (Protect Your Environment) Youth Group has been formed on the Mountains for those aged between 12 and 20. If you would like to know more about it, or join, please get in touch with the President, Michael Smithson, 83 Copeland Street Penrith. Telephone:- Penrith 23567.

THE WOG. (*Emephyllus trianqularis*)

Those members who attended the outing to Springwood in June were intrigued to note the native passion-fruit (*Passiflora herbertiana*) flowering abundantly along the track. Mrs Conabere who had painted these flowers at Coffs Harbour, had found the fruits very uneven in shape and had suspected this was not natural. Enquiries at the National Herbarium, Sydney, produced the information that the fruits were attacked by a beetle of the weevil group.

Investigation proved this to be the case. Ripe fruit were found and they contained grubs and a fine family of wogs. The most aggressive was removed for the purpose of including a painting in my Natural Notes; however, the sudden view of the outside world was overstimulating. He rushed wildly about never still for one second. It is easy to understand why entomologists stick pins through insects. Finally he ended up with eight legs and a double pair of antennae.

I put him back in the bottle containing the passion fruit from which he had been removed, the stalk of which was resting across the bottom of the jar. The wog ran rapidly round and round falling over the stalk on every circuit of the jar for twenty minutes. Finally he climbed up the stalk, AH! Now, I thought, he will return to his family. But no, he merely crouched at the base of the fruit, and with only half an inch to go to reach the gaping hole in its side, he made no attempt to enter. The odour should have been sufficient guide! There he stayed for a further quarter of an hour, and finally crawled back to the bottom of the jar.

Obviously his home was unrecognisable when viewed from without. The poor chap had spent his entire existence cooped on the green walls of *Passiflora*, but nothing short of pushing him back served to reunite him to his family.

Question: How and when do the weevils get out? When the fruit falls to the ground or when it is still on the vine? Does it wait till the skin breaks or eat its way through? Does it eat at all, or only the grub? Isobel K Bowden.

EMU-WREN NESTING IN KATOOMBA

The Emu-Wren is one of the most unusual of the world's small birds. It is described as being 7 ¼ inches long, but four inches of this is tail! Furthermore it has only six tail feathers and these lack barbicels, giving them a skeletal appearance like emu feathers hence the name.

Bird watchers were excited to hear that the Southern Emu-Wren was found recently in the Upper Mountains by John Hobbs. About the same time we found the species in Hartley Vale during our outing down Lawsons Long Alley. Subsequently we learnt that Mr Bert Esgate, a local bird lover, has known for years that this shy, retiring bird inhabits the hanging swamps of Mini Ha Ha Falls reserve.

It was here last month that a nest was found containing three young; low down in the cutty grass of the swamp. Small, dome shaped, with a side entrance, the nest was very hard to find.

Arnold McGill in his book "Australian Warblers" says: "Because the Emu-Wren requires undisturbed damp cover to breed and exist, and because so much of this type of habitat close to cities and larger towns has been destroyed, this interesting species, still relatively common, must have suitable reserves to ensure its survival".

Fortunately, both Minnie Ha Ha and the swampy shores of Wentworth Falls Lake – another habitat – are reserves – and will, we hope, remain so!