



Golden Whistler
JOIN THE GOLD LEAGUE OF BIRD LOVERS
SAVE OUR SONGSTERS
ERHALTE UNSERE SINGVOGELN
PROTEGGETE I NOSTRI UCCELLI CANTORI
ΦΤΑΑΤΕΤΕ ΤΑ ΧΑΙΚΑ ΠΟΤΑΙΑ.

Patron: Mr Allen A. Strom
Advisor in Conservation
Dept. of Education.

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First, there are the positions common to any Society.- president, treasurer, secretary, publicity officer. To these we have added a membership secretary, and there is need for a research and records officer.

Then we have our 530a Management Committee. Its members are trustees of the Valley of Waters picnic reserve, the Conservation Hut, and the Nature Trail. They are appointed by the Blue Mountains City Council on the recommendation of the Society's Committee.

The Conservation Hut is both our joy and our taskmaster. First of all. there must be somebody to man it during the hours we undertake to have it open to the Public. This calls for a hut roster supervisor and a band of workers -- 'regulars', available during school holidays and 'in emergencies'. There is the curator who looks after the exhibits and arranges their presentation; the Hut supplies supervisor; he checks, orders and picks up the stock, or arranges for its delivery; the librarian who looks after our growing number of books, and records borrowings. The Hut has to be cleaned and prepared for meetings (at present volunteers are taking turns to do this) but this too has to be organised by someone. Most of the year firewood has to be available in the Hut, and someone is needed to see it is there. A cup of tea and a biscuit are nice after meetings, so we have a tea hostess and helpers.

Extra hands are always needed at working bees -- either for gardening, painting, the odd bit of carpentry, clearing and cleaning, or for simple clerical work.

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We have an outings convener. Someone much appreciated by the members able to enjoy the monthly bush walk.

Lastly (but one of the most important jobs) we need to have members who are willing to talk about conservation at other societies' functions and in the schools.

Can you help in any of these fields?

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We welcome all, and thank them for their support.
News snippets will be welcomed for our Newsletter.

-- Membership secretary.

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a comprehensive plan for the future development of the Blue Mts.

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In conclusion it is obvious that the vigilance and activity of conservationists will be needed more and more in the future.

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Recently we have had 'Back to the Blue Mountains Month' with much publicity directed towards attracting people to our area, and there is no doubt that they are coming. But what prospect does this present? More urban sprawl, more rape of the environment until there is nothing worth 'coming back to'?

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"That a plan for the development of the Blue Mountains must provide for substantial additions to the areas of National Parks".

Our Society endorsed these resolutions wholeheartedly.

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"It (my government) is however, deeply conscious that economic growth and material well-being no longer reflect the whole aspirations and expectations of the Australian community, and that prosperity alone is no longer exactly equated with true progress".

"In planning for this generation my Government intends to protect the rights and national inheritance of future generations of Australians"

-Extracts from speech of Sir Paul Hasluck,
Governor General, opening 28th Federal Parliament.

March 1973.

Giant Cedars of the past

In a previous Newsletter readers were invited to share records of big, or interesting trees. Please keep this in mind and send along some records, either from reading, or measurements of trees still in existence.

The following notes are culled from P. J. Hurley's book 'Red Cedar'. Bellinger was the Valley of the Giants. There are cedar stumps still standing which are fourteen feet in diameter. They grew in the mixed forests of the coast, along with beech, white bean stinging trees, prickly ash, brush box, and a tangle of lianas.

Red Cedar was the lure which brought the axe men to work in the dark tunnels of the forest. The logs were rolled down the cedar tracks to the river. Vast numbers of cedar logs were brought down the Bellinger to the heads and loaded onto sailing ships. Punt men received a drogherage fee of six pence per hundred super feet. It has been recorded that a drogher ge of £120 (240 dollars) was paid on one huge raft of cedar.

The Bellinger cedar was exceptionally heavy and close grained which made it difficult to manage,

Today there remain mere vestiges of the once unbroken forests where the fresh spring crowns of cedars rose in copper red flame amid the dense green mantle of the earth.

-Isobel Bowden.

THE MISTLETOE BIRD

The Mistletoe Bird is an avian gem not often seen in the upper mountains, at least not in my experience. In six years I have seen only 4 -- 2 single birds and a pair -- and each time where the parasitic mistletoe grows, Lake Medlow, Leura Park and Minna-Ha-Ha gorge. Incidentally 3 of the 4 were seen this Spring.

They are very small birds. The male is darkblue above, bright red chin, breast and under tail. The female is dark grey above, pale below, red under tail. They are difficult to observe, as they flit with great rapidity from one mistletoe clump to another, and the clumps, in this area are generally well up the tallest gum trees.

They generally announce their presence with their high clear, double call, repeated at intervals, Then there is much frustrating foc focusing of field glassws and craning of necks.

Specialised for Diet

The birds live mainly on ripe mistletoe berries, which they dexterously squeeze from their outer casing and swallow whole. The Mistletoe Bird's STOMACH HAS BECOME ADAPTED TO A MERE TUBE, ENABLING LARGE NUMBERS OF BERRIES TO PASS DIREDTLY TO THE INTESTINE and thence quickly through the body -- in 25 to 60 minutes experiments have shown.

When excreted, the sticky seeds often adhere to the tree branches where some would germinate and thus spread the mistletoe.

The nest is considered by many to be the daintiest of all Australian bird nests. Formed of closely felted plant-down bound with cobweb and decorated with brown caterpillar castings or dried wattle blossom, it is hung from a thin horizontal twig, With its side entrance and woven look, it resembles a baby's bootie hanging by the heel.

Widespread Habitat

The habitat of the Mistletoe Bird could be described as throughout Australia, where mistletoe grows. In Tasmania there is no mistletoe and no Mistletoe Birds.

My own sightings illustrate their wide range. I saw my first

pepper-trees.

In North Queensland they are common. In Port Douglas I saw my first Sunbird (imagine a Spinebill with brilliant yellow underparts and a jewelled blue throat). Beside it, in the same flowering shrub, was a male Mistletoe Bird! Even the shrub on its own was a sight to behold!

In the bush beside the road near Townsville was a spectacular Grevillea, an extra large golden-yellow flower-raceme protruded above the pine-like foliage. As the flower was 12 feet or so up, I focused the field glasses upon it for a closer look. As I did so a Mistletoe Bird, brilliant scarlet and dark, gleaming blue, landed on the orange flower and stayed for some seconds.

An interest in nature certainly provides some exhilarating sights and most pleasant memories.

--Graham Alcorn.

THE DANGER OF BURNING OFF

Burning off is the greatest single cause of bush fires, says the February National Parks Journal. Latest N.S.W. Bush Fire Council figure, based on police reports, is 22%. Figures (published 1961) compiled by Commonwealth Forestry & Timber Bureau, based on fires attended by forestry staffs, credit burning off with 10% of known fire causes.

In 1949 the N.S.W. Government legislated to limit the "rights" of farmers, graziers and others to burn off at will. In essence, the legislation (Sections 10 & 12 of Bush Fires Act, 1949) permits a person to burn off his own land outside of a fire danger period, but he must not leave a fire until it is out, or allow it to escape from his property.

The National Parks Association intends to press the Bush Fire Council and Police Department for more strict prosecution of the law in regard to burning off, and invites similar action in support by other organisations and individuals.

W.A.

SURVEY OF NATIVE ANIMALS

The LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY is making record of native animals in the Blue Mts area. If any member should find a dead animal, or sight an unusual one, please phone Mick Dark (Penrith 39 1764) or Michael Smithson (Penrith 21 3567).

DO'NT FORGET THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY MARCH 29th.
COME PREPARED TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE PART IN ^{our} SOCIETY IN 1973.



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

KATOOMBA & DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No 12 March 1973...Price 10 cents.

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AN ENCOURAGING APPROACH

"It (my government) is however, deeply conscious that economic growth and material well-being no longer reflect the whole aspirations and expectations of the Australian community, and that prosperity alone is no longer exactly equated with true progress".

"In planning for this generation my Government intends to protect the rights and national inheritance of future generations of Australians"

- Extracts from speech of Sir Paul Hasluck, Governor General, opening 28th Federal Parliament.

Giant Cedars of the past.

In a precious Newsletter readers were invited to share records of big, or interesting trees. Please keep this in mind and send along some records, either from reading, or measurements of trees still in existence.

The following notes are culled from P J Hurley's book 'Red Cedar'. Bellinger was the Valley of the Giants. There are cedar stumps still standing which are fourteen feet in diameter. They grow in the mixed forests of the coast, along with beech, white bean stinging trees, prickly ash, brush box and a tangle of lianas.

Red Cedar was the lure which brought the axe man to work in the dark tunnels of the forest. The logs were rolled down the cedar tracks to the river. Vast numbers of cedar logs were brought down the Bellinger to the heads and loaded onto sailing ships. Punt men received a drogherage fee of six pence per hundred super feet. It has been recorded that a drogherage of £120 (240 dollars) was paid on one huge raft of cedar.

The Bellinger cedar was exceptionally heavy and close grained which made it difficult to manage.

Today there remain mere vestiges of the once unbroken forests where the fresh spring crowns of cedars rose in copper red flame amid the dense green mantle of the earth.

Isobel Bowden.

THE MISTLETOE BIRD

The Mistletoe Bird is an avian gem not often seen in the upper mountains, at least not in my experience. In six years I have seen only 4 – 2 single birds and a pair – and each time where the parasitic mistletoe grows, Lake Medlow, Leura Park and Minni Ha Ha gorge. Incidentally 3 of the 4 were seen this Spring.

They are very small birds. The male is dark blue above, bright red chin, breast and under tail. The female is dark grey above pale below, red under tail. They are difficult to observe, as they flit with great rapidity from one mistletoe clump to another, and clumps, in this area are generally well up the tallest gum trees.

They generally announce their presence with their high clear, double call, repeated at intervals. Then there is much frustrating focusing of field glasses and craning of necks.

Specialised for Diet

The birds live mainly on ripe mistletoe berries, which they dexterously squeeze from their outer casing and swallow whole. The Mistletoe Birds STOMACH HAS ADAPTED TO A MERE TUBE ENABLING LARGE NUMBERS OF BERRIES TO PASS DIRECTLY TO THE INTESTINE and thence quickly through the body – in 25 to 60 minutes experiments have shown.

When excreted, the sticky seeds often adhere to the tree branches where some would germinate and thus spread the mistletoe.

The nest is considered by many to be the daintiest of all Australian bird nests. Formed of closely felted plant-down bound with cobweb and decorated with brown caterpillar castings or dried wattle blossom, it is hung from a thin horizontal twig. With its side entrance and woven look, it resembles a baby's bootie hanging by the heel.

Widespread Habitat

The habitat of the Mistletoe Bird could be described as throughout Australia, where mistletoe grows. In Tasmania there is no mistletoe and no Mistletoe Birds.

(Sadly this paragraph is unreadable)

In North Queensland they are common. In Port Douglas I saw my first Sunbird (imagine a Spinebill with brilliant yellow underparts and a jewelled blue throat). Beside it, in the same flowering shrub, was a male Mistletoe Bird! Even the shrub on its own was a sight to behold!

In the bush beside the road near Townsville was a spectacular Grevillea, an extra large golden-yellow flower-raceme protruded above the pine-like foliage. As the flower was 12 feet or so up, I focused the field glasses upon it for a closer look. As I did so a Mistletoe Bird, brilliant scarlet and dark, gleaming blue, landed on the orange flower and stayed for some seconds.

An interest in nature certainly provides some exhilarating sights and most pleasant memories.

Graham Alcorn.

THE DANGER OF BURNING OFF

Burning off is the greatest single cause of bush fires, says the February National Parks Journal. Latest NSW Bush Fire Council figure, based on police reports, is 22%. Figures (published 1961) compiled by Commonwealth Forestry & Timber Bureau, based on fires attended by forestry staffs, credit burning off with (?)% of known fires causes.

In 1949 the NSW Government legislated to limit the "rights" of farmers, graziers and others to burn off at will. In essence, the legislation (Sections 10 & 12 of Bush Fires Act, 1949) permits a person to burn off his own land outside of a fire danger period, but he must not leave a fire until it is out, or allow it to escape from his property.

The National Parks Association intends to press the Bush Fire Council and Police Department for more strict prosecution of the law in regard to burning off, and invites similar action on support by other organisations and individuals.

Wilson Alcorn

SURVEY OF NATIVE ANIMALS

The LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY is making record of native animals in the Blue Mountains area. If any member should find a dead animal, or sight an unusual one, please phone Mick Dark (Penrith 39 1764) or Michael Smithson (Penrith 21 3567).

DON'T FORGET THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY MARCH 29TH.

COME PREPARED TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE PART IN OUR SOCIETY IN 1973.

