

MINUTES = MARCH GENERAL MEETING HELD 9/3/73

SPRINGWOOD CIVIC CENTRE

Mr Smithson gave a report on the trapping programme so far, informing the meeting that there had been 51 captures since the commencement of the programme in 1970, using 20 traps on loan from National Parks & Wildlife Service and 18 traps owned by the Society.

Mr Smithson also gave a report on the public meeting held at Springwood on 26th February, 1973 to discuss the Escarpment. Mr Smithson spoke at this meeting on behalf of the Society and the next day a deputation to the Mayor was arranged consisting of our President, Mick Dark and representatives of Landowner organisations in the Mt. Riverview area.

Mr Dark reported on a deputation to the Chairman of the State Planning Authority in which he took part. This had been arranged by local member, Ron Mulock and proved to be a satisfactory exchange of views. Nigel Ashton, Chairman, S.P.A. seemed sympathetic to the need of preserving the Escarpment.

It was decided to write to Council asking if the expected S.P.A. recommendation on the Escarpment would be publicly exhibited and in what way the local community's views would be taken into consideration.

A letter was received from Parks Service indicating that they were investigating ways of 'securing the scenic values of the escarpment, apart from addition to the park'.

Correspondence was received from Council re the Wright St., Glenbrook sub-division. Further consideration of the Lower Mts. Sewerage Scheme was referred to the Committee.

Vice-President Michael Smithson will investigate the possibility of setting up a Nepean Conservation Society sponsored by this Society.

It was resolved that a personal approach should be made to Hawkesbury Dist. Conservation Soc. with a view to setting up a joint environmental committee. It was also resolved to direct the Committee to investigate what further action can be taken to implement the Society's Policy on the Escarpment and to take action if this is considered necessary.

A letter will be sent to Blue Mountains Council asking:-

- (1) in what way the general community is to be involved in discussion on the Town Plan when it is submitted to Council,
- (2) will the Council press for a Regional planning scheme for the Blue Mountains and would the community be involved in developing such a scheme?

THE PIPELINE - TO TRAVERSE OR NOT TO TRAVERSE ?

The Society was called at short notice to give evidence to the gas pipeline inquiry and on 16th March three members of the Society attended the hearing at North Sydney. Mr. Pain read our submission and then answered several questions from a government adviser and one from Mr. J. Butters, General Manager, East-Aust Pipeline Corporation.

Other evidence was given on that day by Mt. Wilson Progress Association, Oatley Flora & Fauna Society, Kurrajong Scenic Preserves Society and other individuals. All were against the proposed central route of the pipeline. The major part of the afternoon was taken up by a lengthy submission from the Aust. Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen which proposed rail tankers as an alternative means of transport.

A full report on the hearing will be given at the next meeting on 13th April at Springwood Civic Centre.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"The matters you have traversed in your submission have been traversed before in this inquiry, and will no doubt be traversed again. "

---- Mr. E.J. Coffey, Commissioner.

" A right of way, is a right of way anyway. "

----- Mr. W.B. Sewell, East-Aust Pipeline Corp.

" Is Butters the cream - or are we being milked ? "

----- L.B.M.C.S.

The Nepean River in the survey area lacks the concentrations of birds found at Nepean Weir. However it is an important habitat. To illustrate this the birds recorded columns have been compiled at three sites along the river.

Birds recorded during survey:

McCanns Is.: black swan

Devlins Rd.: black swan
large egret

little pied cormorant

Blacks Falls: black duck

white faced heron

Farrells Lane Pond, Cranebrook: A small but most productive pond skirted by two roads and used to water stock. Shallow and open water with little cover.

Birds recorded during survey:

royal spoonbill

dusky moorhen

large egret

little black cormorant

black duck

straw necked ibis

* "Poplars lagoon", Cranebrook: Small lagoon with very high waterfowl population. Creek feeding off the lagoon also good habitat. 200 black duck were recorded at one time on this creek.

Birds recorded during survey:

yellow spoonbill

eastern swamphen

royal spoonbill

cattle egret

black duck

* "Flat lagoon", Castlereagh Rd.: A lagoon in the Hawkesbury/Windsor tradition. Having a flat appearance it is flanked by marsh and contains large concentrations of birds.

Birds recorded during survey:

pelican

dusky moorhen

black duck

cattle egret

(* these ^{place} names have been given to these sites by members in the absence of accepted names.)

J.K. Williams Gravel Pit: Most gravel pits are too deep for waterbirds. Cranebrook However one small sector of a pit inspected, contained a small number of birds.

Birds recorded during survey:

black duck

black swan

DISCUSSION OF BIRD RECORDS: The records of birds listed in the report were all compiled by members over the last few years at these sites at irregular intervals.

THE FUTURE

One has only to visit these habitat sites to be struck with their present precarious existence. At Bel-air the swamp is surrounded by houses and factories - a promise of things to come. According to reports, "Poplars Lagoon" is to be mined by a gravel company. Many lands could be easily drained to provide an additional acre of grazing. Some are at the mercy of the planners designing the Penrith lakes scheme. Alas 'SAVE SWAMPS' is the rallying cry of few people.

Action by local groups and local government authorities to ensure the survival of these habitats is the only hope.

A possible bright spot in the future of wetland habitat in the Nepean district is the plan to be incorporated into the Penrith Lakes scheme to provide habitat for waterbirds. However the planning for the lakes scheme has yet to be finalised.

'NATURE IN THE CITY' NOT 'THE CITY Vs NATURE'

Why are these wetlands so important to the Nepean district?

Today, more than ever, the ever increasing realisation of the need for nature within the city structure is apparent. Last stands, local campaigns and battles to retain all the naturalness, from city parks to Moreton Bay figs, remaining in the urban environment are commonplace. There is for existing nature in an urban environment, no such thing as compromise to development, for development in this case, spells irreplaceable loss. People want sewerage, water and electricity and no one questions this demand. People today want naturalness, clean air and trees also - and are these demands unreasonable?

Wildlife and their natural environments need not be confined to National Parks, with the only alternative extinction. The saving of our wildlife (and possibly our future sanity) depends on the ability to plan for its existence in the developments of human society. Wildlife and habitat can exist in the suburban scene. But for the Nepean district the chance will soon run out.

To preserve the wetlands as one feature of the Nepean district's natural environment would be to preserve some diversity and to give naturalness, an often abused and a very fragile resource, a place in the development of the city of Penrith.

BIRDS LISTED IN THIS REPORT

Australian little grebe
Australian pelican
Darter
Black cormorant
Little black cormorant
Pied cormorant
Little pied cormorant
White necked heron
White faced heron
Cattle egret
Large egret
Plumed egret
White ibis
Straw necked ibis
Royal spoonbill
Yellow spoonbill
Black swan
Black duck
Grey teal
Dusky moorhen
Eastern swampen
Coot
Spurwinged plover
Black fronted dotterel
Japanese snipe
Blacked winged stilt
Silver gull

Podiceps novaehollandiae
Pelecanus conspicillatus
Anhinga rufa
Phalacrocorax carbo
Phalacrocorax sulcirostris
Phalacrocorax varius
Phalacrocorax melanoleucos
Ardea pacifica
Ardea novaehollandiae
Ardeola ibis
Egretta alba
Egretta intermedia
Threskiornis molucca
Threskiornis spinicollis
Platalea regia
Platalea flavipes
Cygnus atratus
Anas superciliosa
Anas gibberifrons
Gallinula tenebrosa
Porphyrio porphyrio
Fulica atra
Vanellus miles novaehollandiae
Charadrius melanops
Gallinago hardwickii
Himantopus himantopus
Larus novaehollandiae

References

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SLATER, P., 1970. A field guide to Australian birds: non-
passerines. Rigby.