

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION
of the A. C. T.

"A National Park for the National Capital".

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The committee hopes you like the "New Look of our News-letter and approve a bi-monthly production. The activities for April and May will be found on the back page, so this page may be torn out and placed in a convenient place for reference.

You will note in this publication an article by Mr. Wilson, one of our members. The publications committee would be very pleased to receive articles, letters or interesting quotes from conservation publications, from members of the Association. Interest will be added if members contribute accounts of their outings with the Association rather than the general account now given.

Kosciusko Primitive Area. It has been reported to the Association that 250 letters supporting the Trust's decision to stop spoilation of the Primitive Area were received by Mr. Compton, N. S. W. Minister for Lands and Chairman of the Kosciusko State Park Trust.

Apparently the S. M. H. E. A. will not take no for an answer. The Trust plus three members of the Academy of Science have been invited by Sir William Hudson to view the area again on 19th April, and hear his "on the spot" case.

If the Trust stands firm by its decision, as we hope it will, and the S. M. H. E. A. insists on carrying on with its plans, the matter will shift to a council representing State and Federal Governments.

If you have not voiced your support for the Trusts decision, write immediately to the chairman of the Park Trust, Mr. Compton, Minister for Lands, N. S. W. Lands Department, Sydney.

Remember, these are the facts of the case

1. The Summit Area of the Kosciusko Plateau is unique in Australia. It is extremely beautiful in its natural condition. This natural condition depends upon the shape of the landscape and drainage patterns as have developed over thousands of years.

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2. All waters from the Summit Area are utilized in their lower reaches for power generation and for irrigation diversion.
3. Value from the S. M. A. work will be less than 5% increase in power and no extra water for irrigation. Cost will be £15,000,000.
4. The Snowy Mountains Authority has commenced early stages of work that will finally create new drainage patterns for the Summit Area. This work will entail aqueducts and tunnels. Spoil from the work will be tipped into the valleys.
5. The Trust adopted the recommendation of the Academy of Science in December, 1962, that the Summit Area be left in a primitive condition, as it's an area of such delicate stability that it is easily destroyed by development.

As a final word on this matter, here is a quote from a statement of Theodore Roosevelt regarding protection of one of the unique areas of the United States. If only this feeling was widespread amongst authorities in Australia!

FINER CONSIDERATIONS - Theodore Roosevelt

Speaking of the Grand Canyon, May 6, 1903 .. "I want you to do one thing in connection with it in your own interest and in the interest of the country. . . . to keep this great wonder of nature as it now is. I was delighted to learn of the wisdom of the Santa Fe Railroad people in deciding not to build their hotel on the brink of the canyon. I hope you will not have a building of any kind, nor a summer cottage, a hotel, or anything else, to mar the wonderful grandeur, the sublimity, the great loneliness and beauty of the canyon. LEAVE IT AS IT IS. YOU CANNOT IMPROVE IT. The ages have been at work upon it, and man can only mar it. What you can do is to keep it for your children, your children's children, and for all who come after you, as one of the great sights whichevery American, if he can travel, should see.

"We have gotten past the stage, my fellow citizens, when we are to be pardoned if we treat any part of our country as something to be skinned for two or three years for the use of the present generation, whether it is forest, water or scenery."

MARCH ACTIVITIES

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Meeting - The presence of Mrs. Stead (Thistle Harris), the noted writer of books dealing with Australian wildflowers, at this meeting resulted in many visitors attending.

Mrs. Stead gave a history of the Wildlife Preservation Society of N. S. W. and its work since 1909 to safeguard the flora and fauna of Australia.

The second half of her talk dealt with the alpine flowers of the Kosciusko State Park. Mr. Ed. Slater showed Mrs. Stead's excellent slides of the flowers and the area.

Mrs. Stead praised the work of the Superintendent and Rangers of the Kosciusko State Park and their effort to preserve the area while allowing visitors to see it to the best advantage.

Outing - A beautiful Autumn day made this a popular outing with 60 people attending. Mr. R. Slinn led the group from Picadilly Circus to Mt. Coree where members walked up the Jeep track to the summit or were taken in a land rover by Mr. Murray.

The view from the top was magnificent, looking into the Cotter Valley, then east and south-east to the Canberra area and the Tinderry Mountains, and south to the Mt. Kelly region. While returning down the mountain several members searched diligently for Corroboree Frogs but none were to be seen.

The party proceeded back to Canberra via the Two Sticks Road, passing through beautiful forest country. Our thanks to Mr. Slinn and Mr. Murray for their leadership and help.

Library Additions - The following books are available for borrowing

- "The Alpine Flowers of the Kosciusko State Park"
- "National Parks - a World Need"
- "Australian Waterfowl"
- "Peaks and High Places" - Cradle Mt. - Lake St. Clair National Park, Tasmania.

Several volumes of:-

- "Australian Wildlife" - Journal of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia.
- Victorian N. P. A. Newsletter.
- Queensland N. P. A. Bulletin.
- N. S. W. N. P. A. Journal.

Two Australian News and Information Bureau publications:-

"Native Flowers of Australia"

"Birds and Animals of Australia".

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AUTUMN BIRD NOTES

- Prepared by Mr. S. Wilson.

Many species of birds that are found in the A. C. T. in summer are either totally migratory or partly so and ornithologists are very interested in a variety of problems associated with these movements. Most of the species concerned leave this area during late March to early May, but to some degree the season seems to play an important role. Last Autumn and early winter were mild and this appeared to cause some species to linger longer than usual.

Typical of the unsolved problems involved are :-

Where do individual birds go to?

Some species, e. g. yellow faced and white naped honey-eaters occur from the coast to the dividing range from about Adelaide to Brisbane in summer but except for small flocks, move well north into Queensland and coastal N. S. W. in winter. Do the southern birds migrate to Queensland, leaving coastal N. S. W. populations stationary, or do they all move?

Do all birds return to their breeding areas?

How long do these migration flights take? Do the birds fly direct or drift to their destinations over a period of many weeks?

Do the birds fly as flocks or as individuals?

Do they fly by day or by night?

How do the birds find their way?

Little work has been done in Australia on these matters, but in America where migrant species of perching birds are more numerous than in Australia, some surprising information has been revealed. It has been proved that some species which during the non-migratory season are seen during the day, migrate at night. Large scale investigations have been carried out in the vicinity of high television towers where as many as 1000 birds have been killed in one night by striking the mast or the supporting guy wires.

The majority of local migrant species are not seen to form flocks prior to leaving and one is merely aware of the fact that the species is no longer with us. The dollar-bird, rufous song-lark, pallid cuckoo, horsefield bronze-cuckoo and rainbow-bird are typical of those that simply disappear and are not seen leaving. The dusky wood-swallow has been noticed in flocks in autumn and could migrate as a group. This species and the noisy friar bird are found only 100 miles north of here in winter.

The yellow faced and white-naped honeyeaters are common breeding birds in many local areas, particularly in the Brindabella Ranges. Banding of birds under the Australian Bird-banding Scheme (CSIRO) has shown that a considerable proportion of the birds return to their breeding area each year. In autumn flocks of these birds congregate in suitable feeding areas and as the time for migration draws near they can be seen flying in excited flocks from tree to tree in the relatively small feeding areas. This has been observed at Lake George, along the Murrumbidgee and along the creeks in the Ranges. These species migrate in flocks in daylight and in normal seasons the flights can be seen in the A. C. T. for a period of about six weeks from the beginning of April. It is probable that millions of these birds pass through the A. C. T. each Autumn and spring. The migration has been seen at various places between here and the coast.

The flocks move at tree-top height along any suitable line and are in effect channeled by unsuitable terrain into fairly well defined routes. The flocks have been observed in this area coming north along the Murrumbidgee, north-east down the slopes of the Brindabella Range north in the Snowy Mountains areas, north along Black Mountain and the nearby suburbs, north-east over Campbell and Mount Ainslie, north along the western shores of Lake George and skirting the built up area of Goulburn. The general direction of flight is north-east.

Flocks may be up to 100 birds and individuals or whole flocks may pause to rest in suitable high eucalypts. Flocks may form an all but continuous chain in suitable areas on good days, and if an individual pauses for rest it appears to join in with a later flock so that the composition of any flock is constantly changing. Migration appears to be halted by bad weather.

The yellow-faced honeyeater appears to move before the white-naped honeyeater, but mixed flocks are often seen. Small numbers

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of fuscous honeyeaters migrate through also and during resting times the migrant species associate with sedentary species such as the white-plumed honeyeater and red wattle-bird.

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PLANT NOTES

Since we are now in autumn nearly all the wild flowers have finished blooming. At the higher levels in the mountains, as we saw on Mt. Coree on 31st March, a number of the summer flowers can still be found.



Some people can go into the bush and see nothing, others find every rare flower there is. It is a case of "Eyes" and "No Eyes". Nearly everyone starts as a "No Eyes" but if they are interested they can learn enough to join the "Eyes". To help some people here is a little about a few flowers to be seen even during the cold winter months.

One of these is the common Guinea Flower (Hibbertia obtusifolia) which is a low grey-green leaved bush with golden-yellow flower about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch across. It is common in woodland and open forest country near Canberra and occasional plants often carry a flower or two even in the winter. A figure is given to help you recognise it.

MEETINGSAPRIL

- Date : 23rd. April at 8 o'clock
- Place : Institute of Anatomy
- Feature : Talk and slides by Dr. D. Walker, Reader in Biogeography in the A. N. U.
Dr. Walker's talk "Five Thousand Years of Destruction" will discuss the change of vegetation of Europe by human cultural practice traced with the study of fossil pollen.

MAY

- Date : 28th May at 8 o'clock
- Place : Institute of Anatomy
- Feature : Films - "White Clay and Ochre" - a record of Museum Field Research on Australian Aboriginal Cave Paintings in Western N. S. W.
- "The Black Swan" - a film showing swans on a nest, defending nest from an intruder, cygnets from 2 days old to 6 weeks, nesting site flooded, birds flying off in search of a new place.
- "Escape the City" - Showing national parks in N. S. W.

Remember - visitors are always welcome.

OUTINGSAPRIL

- Date : 28th. April - Sunday
- Place : "Strathnairn"
- Meeting : Corner Dryandra St. and Weetangera Rd.
at 11 o'clock.
- Feature : This is a visit to the property of one of our members Mr. Baird. We hope this will be a day when old and new members get to know each other. There will be fires for cooking a meal at midday. During the afternoon there will be walks beside the Murrumbidgee River, and view the Biology of the stream. Special interest for children.

MAY

- Date : 26th. May - Sunday
- Place : Blue Range
- Meeting : Road in front of Uriarra Homestead,
Uriarra Crossing Rd. at 10.30 a.m.
- Feature : Led by Mr. A. G. McArthur, Forestry and Timber Bureau, to inspect the Pine Plantation at Blue Range and nearby bushland. We may be fortunate enough to see Lyrebirds and their mounds, but will certainly see other wildlife.
